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BJP'S FOREIGN OUTREACH
SERVES NATIONAL INTEREST**MONEY 8**
RBI GUV FLAGS CONTINUED HIGH
INFLATION AS 'A MAJOR CONCERN'**SPORTS 11**
SERENA MAKES
WINNING RETURN

VIJAYAWADA, THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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'I WANT TO PLAY A
COOL, BUBBLY
CHARACTER'

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**22-YEAR-OLD BRAINDEAD STUDENT GIVES
8 PEOPLE NEW LEASE OF LIFE**

A 22-year-old braindead college student gave 8 people a new lease of life as his organs were harvested and transplanted at a hospital here. S V Dhineesh of Salem met with an accident near Annur, some 35 km from here, on June 18 and was taken to a private hospital for first aid and then admitted to KMCH here for specialised treatment. As he did not respond to treatment, he was declared braindead on June 20, a release from KMCH said on Wednesday. His parents - Venkateswaran and Shanthi - came forward to donate their son's heart, kidneys, liver, eyes, skin and bones as was prescribed by the Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu, the release said.

**GOVT BUS DRIVER'S SON STEERS
HIMSELF TO DON IPS HAT**

A government bus driver's son has become the toast of the town after joining the IPS after clearing the UPSC civil service examination. Hailing from Bhalki and brought up in the district headquarter town of Bidar in north Karnataka, Anurag Daru would don the IPS hat after he got the 569th rank in the civil services exams the results of which were announced last month. To celebrate Daru's success, the KSRTC (Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation) on Wednesday organised a felicitation ceremony where the KSRTC chairman M Chandrapa and managing director V Anbukumar honoured him and his parents Manik Rao and Kashi Bai.

**NO OF ITC EMPLOYEES WITH OVER
RS 1 CR SALARY GOES UP TO 220**

The number of employees at conglomerate ITC drawing a salary of over Rs 1 crore per annum has gone up by 44 per cent in the recently-concluded FY2021-22 fiscal, according to the company's annual report. The total number of ITC employees drawing a salary aggregating Rs 8.5 lakh per month or over a crore rupees per year was 220 against 153 in 2020-21, said the latest annual report of ITC. There were 220 employees, who were employed throughout the year and were in receipt of remuneration aggregating Rs 8.5 lakhs per month.

**ISRO'S PSLV-C53 TO LAUNCH 3
SINGAPORE SATELLITES ON JUNE 30**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Wednesday said it will be launching - the second dedicated commercial mission of its commercial arm NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) - 'PSLV-C53' carrying three satellites from Singapore on June 30. The launch vehicle carrying DS-EO satellite along with two other co-passenger satellites is scheduled to lift off at 18:00 hours IST from the Second Launch Pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. The countdown of 25 hours leading to the launch begins at 17:00 hours IST on June 29. The mission, proposes to demonstrate the utilization of the spent upper stage of the launch vehicle as a stabilized platform for scientific payloads.

**Edible oil prices
ease; major
brands cut MRP**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Edible oil prices in the retail market have started easing with softening of international rates and the government's timely intervention, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said on Wednesday.

As per government data, the average retail prices of packaged edible oils have ease slightly, except for groundnut oil, across the country since the beginning of this month and are ruling between Rs 150 and 190 per kg. Last week, edible oil firms Adani Wilmar and Mother Dairy reduced the MRP (maximum retail price) for different varieties of cooking oils by Rs 10-15 per litre.

**CM to launch manufacturing
facilities of POTPL today**

Companies to provide employment to about 15,000 people

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy will inaugurate the manufacturing facilities of Panel Optodisplay Technology Private Limited (POTPL) of TCL group, Dixon Technologies, Foxlink, Sunny Opo tech and lay the foundation stone for yet another unit of Dixon Technologies and Foxlink in Tirupati on Thursday.

POTPL factory (TCL India) makes TV panels from Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMCs) in Tirupati - the TV panel manufacturing facility in the country. This unit is set up with a proposed investment of Rs 1,230 crore, out of which 1,040 crore is realized. It will create a total employment of 3,174. More than 1,000 people are already employed in the unit, for trial productions.



Another company on the list is Sunny Opo tech which makes camera modules for world leaders in mobile phones. The company's aspherical lens application, auto-focus, zoom and multilayer coating with a proposed optical core technologies is used by MI, Samsung, Oppo and Vivo to name a few.

So far, Sunny Oppotech has invested Rs 100 crore out of the proposed 280 crore. The new expansion is expected to employ

1,200 workforce in Tirupati. In addition to the above world leaders that will operate out of Andhra Pradesh, the Chief Minister will launch a production facility at Foxlink.

The trial production for USB Charging Cables for iPhones has already commenced. The company is also testing the product for Printed Circuit Board Assemblies for HP Printers and Apple Pencils. The company has invested Rs 450 crore out of the proposed Rs 1,050 crore to build the facility with 800 employees as of date.

The company plans to give another 1,200 people in the state an opportunity.

In addition to above, the Chief Minister will also virtually inaugurate a facility of Tech Bulls, a software firm, in Ongole.

**HC issues
interim orders
to TDP leader**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a big relief to senior TDP leader and politburo member Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu, the Andhra Pradesh High Court issued Interim orders according permission to construct the demolished wall and adjourned the case on Wednesday.

Anakapalle municipal authorities and revenue officials partially demolished the compound wall of the residence of Ayyanna Patrudu, claiming that it was constructed on encroached land.

Vijay and Rajesh, the sons of Ayyanna Patrudu, have filed a case in the High Court seeking to stop the demolition process of the wall.

**HC unhappy with withdrawal
of cases against MLA**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Wednesday expressed anger against the YSRCP government for withdrawing criminal cases against public representatives without its consent, in violation of the Supreme Court orders. A petition was filed by Ch Anjaneyulu challenging the withdrawal of criminal cases against YSRCP MLA Samineni Udaya Bhanu.

The petitioner brought to the notice of the High Court that the government had withdrawn cases even pertaining to election offences such as distribution of money to the voters and attack on polling officials.

He pointed out that as per the Supreme Court directions, if the government wants to withdraw the cases filed against the public representatives, it has to first take the consent of the State High Court.

The High Court Bench asked how the State Police could withdraw the cases filed against the



MLA only based on the directions of the Director General of Police and district collectors without the knowledge of the public prosecutor.

How can the cases be withdrawn without the High Court's approval?, the court said.

The bench asked the government to submit a detailed affidavit as to how many times the government had taken permission to withdraw the cases against MLAs and how many cases were withdrawn.

The High Court bench further said that if the State government did not file an affidavit, it would give ex-parte orders.

**IPE results: 61 pc IInd year students pass**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana announced the IPE first and second year results on Wednesday. Out of 4,45,604 first year candidates, 54 per cent passed and out of 4,45,604 second year candidates, 61 per cent passed, which is the lowest pass percentage in the recent past. Girls fared better than boys this year.

In all, 72,299 candidates appeared for vocational courses and the pass percentage for the first year is 45 and the second year, 55. The exams were conducted from May 6 to 25 and spot valuation took place from May 18 to June 14. The results were announced in a record time of 28 days. Krishna district has recorded the highest pass percentage of 72 per cent in the State while the least pass percentage, 50, was registered in Kadapa district.

Minister Botsa Satyanarayana said that the March 2022 IPE examinations was the first physical examination conducted after two years due to the Covid Pandemic. The examinations were conducted adhering to the Covid protocol. The Inter Board conducted the exams under the supervision of CCTV cameras for the first time also.

The minister said that the students who wish to go for re-verification can apply on the IPE website from June 25 to July 5, and the advance supplementary examinations would be held from August 3 to 12 in two sessions -- from 9 am to 12 noon and 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm. The students can apply for failed subjects and also for improvement. The IPE practical examinations will be conducted from August 17 to 22 at the district headquarters only and the last date for payment of exam fees is July 8, said the minister.

**884 NEW JUNIOR COLLEGES
TO COME UP IN AP**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

After announcing the IPE results, Minister Botsa Satyanarayana said that the State government would launch 884 new junior colleges across Andhra Pradesh from the current academic year. "Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has taken many bold decisions in the education sector. There are 679 mandals across the State and we are upgrading high schools with class 10 as junior colleges from this academic year in line with the government's decision to have two junior colleges in each mandal," he said.

**13k successful
in Civils prelims**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 13,000 candidates have qualified the civil services (preliminary) examination 2022, the results of which were declared on Wednesday by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

The civil services examination is conducted annually by the commission in three stages -- preliminary, main and interview -- to select officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS), among others.

The preliminary examination was held on June 5, 2022.

All set for Atmakur bypoll

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

All is set for the bypoll to Atmakur assembly segment in Nellore district, slated to be held on Thursday.

The bypoll was necessitated due to the sudden demise of YSRCP MLA Mekapati Goutham Reddy in February. While the YSRCP has fielded Goutham Reddy's brother Mekapati Vikram Reddy, the TDP is staying away from the polls and the BJP has fielded its district unit president G Bharathi Kumar Yadav.

While the YSRCP aims at improving its winning majority of votes, the BJP wants to improve its vote share in the absence of the TDP in the fray. YSRCP leaders, ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, Kakani



Mekapati Vikram Reddy is poised to win the Atmakur bypoll, the ruling party has set an ambitious target to achieve a majority of at least one lakh votes to prove a point

Govardhan Reddy, MPs Magunta Srinivasula Reddy, Maddila Gurumoorthy, former minister P Anil Kumar and many others stayed put in Atmakur and personally monitored the campaign.

**Now, movie tickets
available at price
fixed by Govt**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Film TV and Theater Development Company (APFDC) MD T Vijay Kumar Reddy has said that henceforth, movie tickets would be available to the audience at the prices fixed by the State government. He said the government would bring in the APFDC portal 'Your Screens' with the aim to control black ticketing system and make entertainment available to the public at a lower cost by booking tickets online.

'Your Screens' portal to control black ticketing system

SIPB nod for Adani Green Energy Project

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) meeting chaired by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy here on Wednesday gave its nod for setting up a 3700MW pumped storage project undertaken by Adani Green Energy at an investment of Rs 15,376 crore.

It was discussed that Adani Green Energy project would be developed in four phases, where the first phase will be taken up in 2022-23 at a cost of Rs 1,349 crore, second phase in 2023-24 with Rs 6,984



crore, third phase with Rs 5,188 crore and the final phase will be completed in 2025-26 with Rs 1,855 crore creating a total of 4,000 jobs. Along with this project few other projects in Kadapa,

Parvatipuram, Satya Sai districts were also cleared by the Board for generating green energy.

SIPB approved setting up of a garment manufacturing industry by Punctuate World Pvt Limited at a cost of Rs 50 crore in Pulivendula and Koppurthi, providing employment to 4200 people. The Board also gave a nod for Avisa Foods Pvt Ltd's Shrimp Processing Industry at Mellavelli Foodpark of Krishna district at a cost of Rs 150 crore which would create 2,500 jobs.

Also, clearance was given to set up a hotel (VVPL) at Tirupati

under the Novotel brand by investing Rs 126.48 crore and creating direct employment to 300 people and indirect employment to over 2700 people.

Further, the government decided to transform Koppurthi electronic park into a Textile Region Apparel Park, where a Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Parks will be developed in 1200 acres to produce quality products at low manufacturing costs and to create better employment opportunities.

New terminal building at Vizag airport getting ready

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a shot in the arm to the growth prospects of Vizag, a new terminal building built by the Airport Authority India (AAI) at a cost of Rs 60 crore is ready for operations. The construction of the new terminal was slightly delayed due to Covid-19.

Vizag MP MVV Satyanarayana and Airport Director K Srinivas, along with Airport Advisory Committee members K Kumar Raja, DS Varma and O. Naresh Kumar, inspected the new terminal building.

As of now, all works are complete and cleaning work is in progress. Shifting of the customs/immigration computers to the new terminal only is pending.

The new spacious building can now seat more than double the passengers currently operating from existing buildings and help in smooth flow of passengers both in domestic and international terminals. The Airport Advisory Committee members had requested the airport director to allow passengers to start using the new facility immediately as a trial test for full commercial operation.

With operation of new N5 Taxi track, additional parking bays recently added and now this new international terminal, Vizag airport is on its way to handle double the passenger traffic it currently handles with ease.

With the expansion of the terminal building an additional 10,000 sqm of space will be added to the



existing 20,000 sqm.

The additional space would be utilised exclusively for international arrivals and departures. The

existing space, which is now being used for international arrivals and departures, will be used to cater to the needs of the requirements of the

domestic passengers.

"The new terminal building has six parking bays and three aerobridges. Six more are already oper-

ational, it will facilitate parking of 12 planes at a time. In one hour, 12 flights can land and take off which means handling over 3,000 passengers at the airport at a time. The expansion of the terminal building is expected to take care of that load. The extra space will help ensure social distancing," said O Naresh Kumar, Airport Advisory Committee member.

Two new baggage handling belts, and 4 additional departure gates have been added.

In addition to above there are four parking bays at the apron near the old terminal building. These parking bays are now being used for the movements of non-scheduled aircraft and VIP planes.

The canopy work is also fully completed and operational.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham:
Tithi: Dashami: Jun 22 08:45 PM to Jun 23 09:41 PM
Ekadashi: Jun 23 09:41 PM to Jun 24 11:12 PM
Nakshatram:
Revati: Jun 22 05:03 AM to Jun 23 06:14 AM
Rahukalam: 1:56 PM to 3:33 PM
Yamagandam: 03:45 AM to 05:29 AM
Varjyam: 05:39 PM to 07:19 PM
Gulika: 9:02 AM to 10:40 AM
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Mostly cloudy
Temp: 33°C
Humidity: 73%
Sunrise: 5:36 AM
Sunset: 6:43 PM
Updated: JUNE 22, 2022 5:00 PM

Murmu certain to win

■ YSRCP, BJD declare support; JMM also may back her ■ Challenge for Oppn to show their unity

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

Winning in the forthcoming Presidential election has become easy for the National Democratic Alliance's candidate Draupadi Murmu, with the YSR Congress in Andhra Pradesh and the Biju Janata Dal in Odisha extending their support. YSR Congress president and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has already assured the BJP leadership of his party's support to the NDA's choice in the Presidential election.

After the NDA declared former governor Draupadi Murmu, hailing from Odisha, as its Presidential candidate, Odisha Chief Minister and president of Biju Janata Dal Naveen Patnaik expressed his happiness. Naveen Patnaik tweeted: "Congratulations to Draupadi Murmu on being announced as candidate of NDA for the country's highest office. I was delighted when the Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed this with me. It is indeed a proud moment for the people of Odisha. I am sure Murmu will set a shining example for women empowerment in the country". Biju Janata Dal also expressed its support to Draupadi Murmu. The BJP



BJP TS unit hopes to benefit in reserved seats

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Bharatiya Janata Party's Telangana unit leaders are exultant at the selection of Draupadi Murmu, a tribal figure and former governor, as the NDA's Presidential candidate since it would help the party win particularly in the constituencies reserved for STs, in the forthcoming Telangana Assembly elections.

The BJP, which aims to

come to power in Telangana, has been focusing on reserved Assembly constituencies.

In Telangana, out of the total 119 constituencies, 19 are reserved for SCs and 12 for STs.

Following directions from the party high command, the BJP Telangana unit has concentrated on the 31 reserved Assembly constituencies as per its Mission-19 and Mission-12.

leadership feels that the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) headed by Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren may also extend the party's support to Draupadi Murmu. The reason is that when

Draupadi Murmu was Governor of Jharkhand she maintained good relations with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. So, the JMM leadership has a soft corner for Draupadi Murmu.

MLA Vamsi hospitalised in Punjab

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Gannavaram MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi reportedly fell seriously ill and was rushed to a hospital in Mohali of Punjab. However, doctors said his health was stable at present and there was no need to worry after conducting ECG and 2D echo tests on him and asserted that Vamsi will be discharged from the hospital in a day or two. MLA Vamsi went to Mohali for study purposes and fell ill.

According to the reports, MLA Vamsi was continuing higher studies after he got a seat in the Indian School of Business Hyderabad last year to do the Advanced Management Programme in Public Policy Course. He has been attending classes on the Mohali campus in Punjab since Monday. According to the sources, MLA Vamsi who went to class on Tuesday, was rushed to hospital after complaining of pain in left



arm. The family members said doctors informed them that Vamsi's health was stable at present and he will return to state in a few days.

MLA Vamsi who was elected from Telugu Desam later shifted his loyalty to YSR Congress and made several controversial statements against Chandrababu Naidu and other leaders. Recently the YSRCP leaders in the Gannavaram Assembly Constituency were up-arms against the MLA Vamsi and took the issue to the notice of the party high command.



SBI CGM Naveen Chandra Jha calls on CS Sharma

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Bank of India Amravati Circle Chief General Manager Naveen Chandra Jha paid a courtesy call to Chief Secretary Dr Sameer Sharma on Wednesday. Naveen Chandra Jha took charge as the SBI CGM recently and made a courtesy visit to CS at Amaravati Secretariat. During the meeting, CS Dr Sameer

Sharma briefed the CGM on the various developmental and welfare schemes being implemented by the government in the State, especially for the farmers and women.

Dr Sameer Sharma explained the various bank-linked schemes, sponsored programmes, their implementation and asked the CGM to provide appropriate support to the government to make those

schemes and programmes more successful.

Naveen Chandra Jha said the State Bank of India would give top priority to the developmental and welfare schemes being implemented in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Finance Ministry EO Secretary K Satyanarayana and other representatives from the State Bank of India Amaravati Circle were present.

Afghanistan quake kills 1,000 people, deadliest in decades

PNS ■ KABUL

A powerful earthquake struck a rural, mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan early Wednesday, killing 1,000 people and injuring 1,500 more in one of the deadliest temblors in decades, the state-run news agency reported. Officials warned that the already grim toll may still rise. Information remained scarce on the magnitude 6.1 temblor near the Pakistani border, but quakes of that strength can cause severe

damage in an area where homes and other buildings are poorly constructed and landslides are common. Experts put the depth at just 10 kilometers another factor that could lead to severe destruction. The disaster posed a major test for the Taliban-led government, which seized power last year as the US, planned to pull out from the country and end its longest war, two decades after toppling the same insurgents in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

Rescuers rushed to the area



by helicopter Wednesday, but the response is likely to be complicated since many inter-

national aid agencies left Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover.

Reaching rural areas even in the best circumstances remains difficult in Afghanistan, a landlocked nation just smaller than Texas with rutted mountain roadways that may now have sustained significant damage.

Neighboring Pakistan's Meteorological Department said the quake's epicentre was in Afghanistan's Paktika province, some 50 kilometers southwest of the city of Khost. Buildings were also dam-

aged in Khost province, and tremors were felt some 375 kilometers away in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad.

Footage from Paktika showed men carrying people in blankets to waiting helicopters. Others were treated on the ground.

One resident could be seen receiving IV fluids while sitting in a plastic chair outside the rubble of his home and still more were sprawled on gurneys.

Deputy secretary in CM Kejriwal's office, 2 SDMs suspended on corruption charges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A deputy secretary in Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's office and two sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) have been suspended by Lt Governor V K Saxena on corruption charges, official sources said on Wednesday. The charges of "procedural lapses indicating corruption in land related matters" against the deputy secretary were from his tenure as Narela SDM, they said.

"The case against the deputy secretary at CMO has nothing to do with the Delhi CM's office," a Delhi government

official said.

Prakash Chandra Thakur posted as deputy secretary in the chief minister's office (CMO), Vasant Vihar SDM Harshit Jain and Vivek Vihar SDM Devender Sharma were suspended and disciplinary proceedings ordered against them, sources said.

"The charges against the three officials were related to procedural lapses in land matters hinting corruption," an official said. The trio are DAN-ICS cadre officers.

"The transfer and postings of officers of Delhi government comes under the Services department that is handled by

the Lt Governor. So, Delhi government has no say in whoever is given a posting," the Delhi government official said.

The move reflected LG Saxena's commitment to zero tolerance to corruption and ensuring probity in the functioning of the government, one of the sources said.

The lieutenant governor had on Monday suspended two assistant engineers of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) after finding lapses in the construction of EWS flats in Kalkaji Extension.

The Delhi BJP attacked the Kejriwal government over the suspension of the officials.

13k successful in Civils prelims

Continued from Page 1

Nearly 11.52 lakh people have applied for the examination and as many as 13,090 candidates have qualified it, an official said.

The UPSC has put up on its website -- www.upsc.gov.in -- a detailed list mentioning roll numbers of candidates who have been declared successful in the test.

Initially, a total of 861 vacancies were sought to be filled through the civil services examination 2022, which have now been increased to 1,022, the official said.

All the successful candidates have been asked to apply again in the Detailed Application Form-I (DAF-I) for the civil services (main) examination 2022, a statement issued by the UPSC said.

The dates and important instructions for filling up the DAF-I and its submission will be announced in due course of time on the website of the commission, it said.

Candidates are also informed that marks, cut-off marks and answer keys of the civil services preliminary examination 2022 will be uploaded on the commission's website only after the entire process of the civil services examination 2022 is over, i.e. after the declaration of the final result, the UPSC said.

The 'Amma Vodi' programme to be held on June 27. The minister said that the Education Department was analyzing the reasons for the low pass percentage in some districts in the Intermediate examination results and would take all necessary steps to achieve better results.

Education Principal Secretary B Rajasekhar, Intermediate Education Council and Commissioner MV Seshagiri Babu, Controller of Examinations GV Prabhakara Reddy and others were present.

SIPB nod for Adani Green Energy Project

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister has instructed the officials to prioritize connecting the area with railways as the government will provide uninterrupted electricity, water and other infrastructure facilities to the parks.

Speaking at the meeting, the Chief Minister said that there is immense potential for

green energy generation of over 30000 MW in the state, which requires about 90000 acres. He said that Green ? Energy projects are going to be of great benefit to farmers as they can earn a minimum lease of Rs 30,000 per acre as a fixed income, especially to those in rain-fed areas. He directed the officials to look at those projects for which MoUs have been signed and are yet to

start their operations.

The Chief Minister said focus should be laid on bringing global companies investments and added there are good opportunities for investments in Electronics, Tourism and Hospitality sectors in the State.

He said there are many electronic manufacturing industries in Kopparthi and added to ensure more global compa-

nies invest in that location. He instructed the officials to take steps to set up a railway line to Kopparthi for easy transportation of goods and added to give priority to it so that industrial growth will be expedited in Kopparthi. He said it is also important to connect Industrial nodes with railways and added that every node should be linked with railway lines.

Now, movie tickets available...

Continued from Page 1

To clarify the doubts of the theater owners and exhibitors that they would run into losses, the APFDC MD issued a press release on Wednesday.

From now onwards the audience can buy tickets of new release movies by booking tickets online through Your Screens portal. If the tickets are booked from other portals additional Rs 20 to Rs 25 charges will be levied, he said and added that Rs 1.95 will be charged excess if booked through Your Screens portal.

Vijay Kumar recalled that the cine industry's top hero's met chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and asked to introduce an online ticketing system. In this backdrop last year September, the then minister held a meeting with

representatives of the cine industry 24 crafts like movie exhibitors, distributors and service providers and others and after taking their consent the government has taken this decision of online ticketing. He recalled that it was clearly stated in the MOU that the money would be transferred to the theaters on a daily basis i.e. on any given day.

He said the theatre owners need not worry that with the government's online ticketing policy the old contract would be canceled, the old agreements will continue as usual, he said. In addition to the existing online portals, theaters should also allow audiences to book tickets through Your Screens brought by the government. He said the government would also provide the necessary hardware and software.

HC issues interim...

Continued from Page 1

VV Satish, counsel for the petitioners, argued that the structure was constructed after seeking prior approval of the plan. The wall construction was done after the Tehsildar and Water Resources Department officials had examined the boundaries.

The counsel said that the demolition was done with political vendetta.

Considering the arguments, the judge issued interim orders allowing the petitioners to construct the wall of the house.

CM to launch manufacturing...

Continued from Page 1

Tech Bulls is expected to generate an employment of about 800 people along with mentoring 20 start-ups which is expected to create an employment of about 200. The company has kept aside a start-up fund of about Rs 20 crore for this purpose.

Jagan will also partake in the groundbreaking ceremony of Dixon Technologies, India's leading EMS company and another unit of Foxlink, which is being developed by Seven Hills Digital Park.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG

Dressed/With Skin	₹308
Without Skin	₹323
Broiler at Farm	₹173

EGG RATES ₹/100

VIJAYAWADA	382
HYDERABAD	381
VISAKHAPATNAM	409
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.84

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Nadu-Nedu works hit by shortage of cement

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government's prestigious scheme Manabadi Nadu-Nedu, envisaged to develop both government and management schools by creating more infrastructure facilities and building additional classrooms, has been affected by scarcity of cement. The construction works in most of the places in NTR district are yet to begin due to shortage of cement, though the Parents Monitoring Committees (PMC) laid foundation stones.

According to available information, the State government has sanctioned Rs.185.12 crore to construct 790 additional classrooms and set up other amenities in 123 schools in NTR district under Nadu-Nedu Phase-2. All the works have been monitored by the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), Panchayat Raj Department, NABARD and other government agencies.

The State government has sanctioned Rs.64.68 crore to 308 schools to create 10 types of facilities in all the schools as



part of Nadu-Nedu phase -2. Toilets with running water, electrification with fans and tube lights, drinking water supply, furniture for students and staff, entire campus painting, major and medium repairs, green crassy chalkboards, English labs, kitchens sheds etc. are the main facilities. Compound walls were sanctioned under MGNREGS for rural schools and Nadu-Nedu funds for those in urban areas.

But most of the additional classroom works have not

begun due to the non-availability of cement. District Collector S Dilli Rao spoke to higher officials as well as cement supply companies, but in vain. As per the State government's directions, school PMCs are looking after the works under the community contract system. All the 123 schools are situated in rural areas and the committee representatives belonged to economically weaker sections. People's representatives were non-cooperative. Several school management committees had purchased iron, chips

and bricks for the construction of classrooms, but they were unable to start the works without sand and cement. Both sand and cement should have been provided by the State government and the government directly deducted the money from the schools' CFMS accounts for cement while sand was provided free of cost. Some school managements have purchased cement from private dealers and started the works, but most of the schools do not have a surplus budget to follow suit.

The construction works in most of the places in NTR district are yet to begin due to shortage of cement, though the Parents Monitoring Committees (PMC) laid foundation stones.

According to the authorities, Nadu-Nedu Phase-2 works should be grounded before school reopening. The State government had announced that the schools would reopen on July 5 instead of July 4.

The SSA engineering officials, when contacted, said that the cement supply had been stopped due to technical reasons. They further said that within a few days, cement would be supplied to the schools and works would be started before school reopening.



All set for inauguration of Vakulamata Temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP Minister for Energy, Environment and Mining Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy said all arrangements were in place for the inauguration of the prestigious Vakulamata temple near Patakavla (Perur Banda) by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on June 23. Speaking to the media after inspecting the

arrangements on Wednesday at Vakulamata temple, he said it took three years for the temple rejuvenation as per the directions of AP CM on 83.42 acres where TTD is building a Kalyana Mandapam and a rest house. He said the temple will open up for the darshan of devotees from June 23 afternoon onwards and will be developed as a pil-

grim tourism hub. TTD Agama advisor Dr Vedantam Vishnu Bhatta charyulu said as per Skanda, Varaha, and Bhavisyottara Puranas, Vakulamata is believed to be the iconic mother of Venkateswara. He said the temple was developed as per Agama Shastra and the gopuram has been gold plated with 20 kg gold with the support of TTD.

Inter results: Good show by students of SC Gurukuls

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Social Welfare Minister Merugu Nagarjuna said that students of SC Gurukuls scored impressive marks in the Intermediate exams and students of Nellore District achieved 84.34 percent pass. Minister Nagarjuna explained the results achieved by BR Ambedkar Gurukul students. Out of 11,776 students who attended the Intermediate first year examinations, 6,713 students passed and 7,745 students of second year passed in the examinations out of total 10,958 students appeared. He said that the State pass percentage was 54 percent in the Inter first year and the Gurukul students achieved 57 percent and the State pass percent was 61 percent in the second year and Gurukul

Students beat it with 70.67 percent pass.

Minister Nagarjuna said that 4,229 students in first year and 3,941 students in the second year passed with First Class in the Intermediate exams. He said that Komarada Gurukul in Parvathipuram district and Nijampatnam Gurukul in Bapatla district secured 100 percent pass results in Junior Inter. He further said that in senior Inter results along with Komarada and Nijampatnam Gurukuls, the Devipatla Gurukul also achieved 100 percent results. The minister added that Nellore District stood in first place with 84.34 percent pass and Krishna district stood in second place with 77.25 percent in Gurukuls.



Collector interacts with differently-abled students

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao, on Wednesday, visited the Vijaya Mary Blind School at Gunadala and interacted with the students of Annamma School for Differently Aabled, Ibrahimpatnam. He interacted with the differently abled students and enquired about their problems. The Collector, moved by their words, burst into tears.

Later, he said that he would set up an officers committee to inspect the welfare hostels and shelter homes in the district.

"The school management ill-treats the students. They threatened us not to say this others. If we try to say to anyone, they would beat students up," said students of Annamma school.

The Collector said that it was unfortunate to live as a paralytic away from parents. They should not face this type of situation. Service to differently abled students is like service to goddess, he said.

He further said that the government had registered a



case against the organisation and he assured the students that stringent action would be taken against those who were responsible. The government is taking several awareness activities with posters in the district, he added. He said that the State government would take necessary action not to repeat the bad incidents and surveillance on all the welfare houses and

shelter homes in the district. Anyone can call 1098, 100 or 181 and get help whenever they are in trouble, he added.

IDCS Project Director G Umadevi, Tahsildar Durga Prasad, Forum for Childline district coordinator Arava Ramesh, Vijaya Mary Blind School organisers Amala, Rajajeswari, Fillo, Kalpana and Vizi, and others were present.

"The school management ill-treats the students. They threatened us not to say this others. If we try to say to anyone, they would beat students up," said students of Annamma school.

SFI protests against move to convert SRR & CVR into women's college

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada city unit of the Students Federation of India (SFI) staged a protest at the college gate on Wednesday, against the government's decision to convert SRR & CVR Government Junior College into a women's college. They raised slogans demanding withdrawal of G.O.No 85, which was issued in this regard.

Speaking on the occasion, SFI NTR district president M Someswara Rao and secretary Ch Venkateswara Rao demanded that the State government should withdraw the G.O.No.85 immediately.

They further said that as many as 2,000 students belonging to SC, ST, BC and minorities were studying in SRR & CVR Junior College. If



the State government converted the college into a women's junior college, those sections would face severe problems in continuing their studies, they said. They pointed out that several great people studied in SRR & CVR College. The move would adversely affect the students belonging to financially backward sections, they added.

The SFI leaders said that the students within a 40-km radius

of the SRR & CVR College depended on it. The admissions have been steadily increasing for the past three years, a majority of whom are boys. If the State government converts it into a women's college, the college would be closed, they said.

The student leaders have warned that if the government did not withdraw the G.O., students and parents would protest at the college.

2 fatally fall into a ditch in Medak district

PNS ■ MEDAK

Two students of fourth class in the government primary school at Kongodu village under Kolcharam mandal fell into a ditch, dug by earthmovers, behind their school and met with death. The deceased were identified as Ajay (9), Narasimhulu (9), sons of brothers Mangali Lalaiiah and Mangali Sekhar.

A pall of gloom descended on the village following the death of two boys belonging to the same family. Eyewitnesses said that the duo was very much in the school till lunch time. However, they fell into the ditch while playing. Noticing the accident, other pupils complained about it to the teachers. With the help of the locals, the bodies were retrieved from the ditches.

Speed up housing, OTS schemes: Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao conducted a video-conferencing with Revenue Divisional Officers (RDO), MPDOs, Tahsildars and Housing Department officers on Jagananna Sampurna Gruha Hakku scheme and Pedalandariki Illu, on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Dilli Rao said that all the department officers should coordinate and complete the sanctioned 75,949 houses within the stipulated period. Conduct meetings with the beneficiaries, who have not started the house construction, he said.

He further said that as many as 43,797 houses were below benchmark level. He made it clear that all the officers would resolve the technical problems regarding



building materials and complete the houses within the deadline.

Moreover, he said that the digital signature process of the beneficiaries should be sped up in Jagananna Sampurna Gruha Hakku (OTS) scheme. As many as 24,199 beneficiaries have

registered their names online, he said. "Housing and Revenue department officers should coordinate with grama sachivalayam secretaries and volunteers and make them as partners," said the Collector. He wanted to fix documents and deaths regarding OTS registrations.

Meanwhile, the Collector said that officers would take necessary steps to sanction bank loans and cash credit loans to those who are eligible and Self Help Groups. DRO K Mohan Kumar, Krishna ZP CEO PS Surya Prakash, Housing PD Sridevi and others were present.

'BJP, Modi shedding crocodile tears for tribals'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CPI parliamentary party leader in Rajya Sabha Binoy Viswam has alleged that the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are shedding crocodile tears for tribals by announcing Droupadi Murmu as the Presidential candidate.

He said that tribals have been fighting for water, land and forest (Jal, Jameen, Jangle), but the Central government disregarded their problems as well as welfare.

The CPI MP participated in a "Meet The Press" at the Press Club in Vijayawada on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion,



Binoy Viswam highlighted the BJP failures and how it neglected the tribals in the country. By the announcement of Murmu as Presidential candidate, the BJP is trying to say that the saffron party is doing a favor to the tribals. The RSS never gave

importance to women, he pointed out.

He further said that Modi's government had been neglecting 33 percent reservation for women at the legislatures and asked how he could speak on women empowerment. The

BJP rooting for tribals is like a stepmother pretending to love children, he alleged.

He said that 17 Opposition parties unanimously announced former Central minister Yashwanth Sinha as the Presidential candidate. He

claimed that the Opposition's unity would play a key role in the 2024 general elections.

The MP said that the country's financial system was too bad and chaotic, which had an impact on all the States. Modi's rule is like Hitler's rule, he alleged.

"There was no proper discussion on Agnipath in the Defence Ministry. The Union government announced the scheme unilaterally and blindly," Binoy Viswam said.

Vijayawada Press Club president Nimmaraju Chalapatirao, secretary R Vasanth, APUWJ Vijayawada president Chava Ravi and State council member Shaik Babu were present.

AIC agreement with Syngenta to support Guntur chilli farmers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a unique move to empower smallholders, and save them from the unfavorable price fluctuations due to unpredictable market conditions, Syngenta India has entered into an exclusive agreement with the Agriculture Insurance Company of India (AIC) for chilli growers of Guntur. The agreement will facilitate guaranteeing a fair price to the farmers for their crop produce by indemnifying them for losses incurred due to a fall in market prices. Dr KC Ravi, Chief Sustainability Officer, Syngenta,

He said that they have been working with the right partners to create a sustainable growth path for smallholder farmers.

said: "We understand the pain points of the farmers. This initiative is designed to provide smallholder farmers the requisite shield against market price fluctuation, securing their income and sup-

porting them to keep cultivating the preferred crop." He said that they have been working with the right partners to create a sustainable growth path for smallholder farmers. Hot pepper farmers have an average land holding of 2 acres and invest around Rs 1.5 lakhs per acre to cultivate the crop. Preventing their loss when the market price of the commodity is not in their favor at the time of harvest will come as a relief to farmers as they can safeguard their investment, and in turn, reinvest that into their operation and next season's crop.



Chemical factory sealed for causing pollution

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The officials sealed a chemical factory at Erikepalli village in Dachepalli mandal on Wednesday for generating pollution.

Under the supervision of Gurajala RDO Addaiah, Tahsildar Venkateswulu Naik sealed the factory. He locked the gates of the factory.

Earlier, Palnadu district Collector Shiva Shankar visited Erikepalli village where the villagers organized rasta roko in protest against the air and water pollution being generat-

ed by some chemical factories in Dachepalli.

The villagers squatted on the road holding containers in front of the Collector when he went to the village. They complained to the Collector that some chemical factories were generating water and air pollution. The Collector told the media that Rs 20 lakh was released from the mineral fund to make arrangements to supply potable water to 17 and 18 wards at the Erikepalli village.

He said that there are 12 industries in the area which are causing water and air pollution.

He said that the Krishna water would be diverted from Pondugala to the SC and ST colony pump house.

The Collector said that the 40 HP motor submerged in the water at Pulichintala project which led to increase of underground water consumption. The underground water sources are getting polluted due to the chemical factories, he said.

The villagers as well as the local MLAs brought the issue to his notice and he responded immediately. The municipal commissioner was directed to supply drinking water through

tankers, the Collector said.

"A committee has been set up comprising the General Manager, Industries of Factories, Pollution Control Board Executive Engineer, RWSSC, APIIC, and the Municipal Commissioner to immediately assess water pollution and air pollution. If pollution is found, the Commissioner Industries and Member Secretary will discuss with the Pollution Control Board officials and take steps to shut down the companies immediately", the Collector informed. Collector Shiva

Sankar said that four months of time would be given to the factories to take steps to regulate pollution. If the factories did not take measures to check pollution, then action would be initiated against the factories, he added.

The Collector said that when he went to Erikepalli village the villagers did not give him an opportunity to explain to them the steps being taken to check the pollution. Dachepalli commissioner Sri Vidya and Gurajala RDO Addaiah among those who accompanied the Collector.

Over 1,646 mobile phones traced, handed over to victims: SP

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District SP Malika Garg has taken special initiatives to render better police services to the people of the district. The SP introduced a dedicated initiative called Missing/Lost Mobile Tracing which has brought joy back in the eyes of thousands of people who lost/missed their mobiles.

The SP made available a new proforma at every Police Station to receive complaints of lost phones and specially designed a SOP to identify the lost phones. Since the inception of this special initiative of the SP, the district police so far has traced 1646

missing/stolen mobiles with-in various police stations across the district and they have been handed over to the victims. On this occasion, the SP said the Prakasam police are always at the forefront to provide better services to the people through innovative programs. The SP informed that a special technical team was set up in the IT Core wing to trace the missing mobiles effectively and every complaint related to mobiles would also be entered in CCTNS. "Over 2935 missing mobile complaints have been received till now and in the last seven months 1646 mobile phones worth Rs.1,64,60,000 have been

traced and handed over to the victims through this Mobile Tracing Program and remaining 800 mobiles will also be identified soon", the SP said.

The SP said that people could go to the police station as soon as they lost their phone, fill out the form and hand it over at the reception counter. In return the complainant is given an acknowledgement receipt as if the complaint had been taken. The police would then thoroughly investigate the complaint and send the details to the IT core team. The mobile phone could be traced using some applications with the high-end technology in the IT core wing, she said.



Vasireddy Padma condemns attack on woman in property row

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Andhra Pradesh Women's Commission chairperson Vasireddy Padma condemned the attack on a woman Kotamma over property issue at Vennadevi village in Sattenapalli mandal.

In a statement here on Wednesday, she said that a man attacked and inflicted injuries to his elder brother's daughter on property issue. She said that she was moved when she saw the woman was being attacked brutally by her uncle on social media.

She said that in the daylight attack, he attacked her with a hunting sickle but nobody went to her rescue, she regretted. She spoke to the doctors of the private hospital in which she was undergoing treatment



and inquired about her health condition.

She also spoke with Sattenapalli rural police officials and knew the details of the incident. She directed the police officials to ensure that the accused is punished rigorously and wished that the victim would get well soon.

Mahindra's 3,00,000th TS-made tractor rolled out

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mahindra Tractors, part of Mahindra's Farm Equipment Sector, the world's largest tractor manufacturer by volume, rolled out its 300,000th Telangana-made tractor from the company's tractor manufacturing facility in Zaheerabad.

Mahindra's 300,000th Telangana-made tractor was rolled out in the presence of Minister for Municipal Administration K Taraka Rama Rao. Sharing the picture on twitter, KTR said, "Was delighted to launch the 3,00,001st MahindraRise tractor made in Telangana at Zaheerabad today. Hey Anand mahindra Ji, you may have to bring more business to my state for the way I've been posing & marketing your products".

Responding to it Mahindra said, 'You are a phenomenal



brand ambassador, KTR, no doubt about that. My only concern is that you may be stolen by the skyrocketing Bollywood empire!

Meanwhile, Speaking at launch, "The Government of Telangana is very proud of what the Mahindra group has been able to achieve in the state, through the roll-out of its 300,000 Telangana-made tractors. With Mahindra's large

presence in Zaheerabad, the company's manufacturing facility has provided opportunities to thousands, in not only making products for the domestic market, but also position Telangana as one of the largest tractor export hubs, based on Mahindra's world-class manufacturing facilities. As we move along, we look forward to Mahindra's next milestone in tractor production in the next

few years. Commenting on the milestone, Hemant Sikka, President - Farm Equipment Sector, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. said, "Rolling-out our 300,000th Telangana-made tractor from our Zaheerabad facility, is a significant milestone for all of us at Mahindra, and for the state of Telangana. Besides being a hub for wide range of products for the Indian market, the plant also caters to over 60 markets, including advanced markets of U.S., Japan and Europe. In line with the agri agenda of Telangana, we thank our colleagues in Telangana and the state government in helping us achieve this feat. We will soon roll-out our new light-weight K2 tractor series from our Zaheerabad facility. Established in 2012, Zaheerabad is Mahindra's youngest and largest tractor manufacturing plant in terms of capacity.

Narayana died due to torture by SI Karimullah: Somireddy alleges

PNS ■ NELLORE

Telugu Desam party senior leader and former minister Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy on Wednesday alleged that Udayagiri Narayana died due to police torture.

He said that Sub-inspector of Podalakuru police station Karimullah tortured Narayana in police custody. He said that the Sub-inspector behaved cruelly and excessively wherever he worked. But no action had been taken against him so far as he was enjoying the patronage of minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy.

Somireddy held minister Kaskani Govardhan Reddy responsible for the death of Narayana. The Collector and SP did not respond when a Dalit died of torture by SI, he

lashed out. Somireddy said that the body of Narayana was found hanging but the family members and friends were not allowed to see the body. Immediately after post-mortem, the body was cremated against the custom of burial in order to erase the evidence of torture, he alleged. Somireddy said that over 40 police personnel intimidated the family members of deceased Udayagiri Narayana, he flayed. Some villagers met the Circle Inspector and complained to him about the abusive language the SI Karimllah was using against the general public, somireddy said.

The former minister consoled the bereaved family of Udayagiri Narayana at Kandamuru village on Wednesday.

Collector inspects arrangements for PM's visit

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari district Collector P Prasanthi directed the officials and heads of various departments to expedite the arrangements for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's programme. The Collector, on Wednesday, along with Superintendent of police U Ravi Prakash and Joint Collector J V MUrli, inspected the arrangements being made for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's programme. The Prime Minister will participate in the 125th birth anniversary of freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju on July 4. The Collector said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, Union Ministers and state ministers



would participate in Alluri Sitarama Raju's 125th birth anniversary on July 4.

The Collector said that the Prime Minister would address a public meeting on July 4 at Pedda Amiram village near here. She inspected the venue of the public meeting, helipads, VVIP and VIP car parking places. She discussed with the police officials the VIP gallery

and security arrangements. The Collector directed the heads of various departments to take steps to complete the given assignments. She instructed them to ensure that no inconvenience takes place in the programme. Collector Prasanthi said that as part of Azadi Ka Amrut various programmes are organized from June 27 to July 4.

Officials directed to adhere to quality standards in construction works

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Municipal Commissioner Keerthi Chekuru directed the officials to follow the quality standards in carrying out construction works.

On Wednesday, the commissioner inspected the newly constructed CC drains at Sai Krishna Nagar and Ahmednagar. She inspected the patch works undertaken on the drains and CC roads and issued appropriate directions to the authorities concerned on the works.

On this occasion, the Commissioner inspected the newly constructed CC drain. She checked the drain measurements and quality with a rebound hammer. She instructed the amenity secretaries to ensure that the development works are com-



pleted within the stipulated time and adhere to the quality standards and that the secretaries are required to be present and supervise the works during the construction of canals and roads.

The AE was instructed to record the estimates and values of the work in the M. Book from time to time,

and the Third Party Quality Controller was specifically instructed to maintain the file with photos of the various stages during the work. The Commissioner directed the officials to process the bills as soon as the works are completed and there should be no delay in processing the bills anywhere. Since the

works of Laljan Basha park, near the BR stadium, were completed, the park should be made available to the public, she told the officials. She asked the DEE to identify the localities which are facing acute drinking water shortage and take steps to supply water to the areas.

Keerthi Chekuri directed the officials to take steps to clean the drain at Kankara gunta railway crossing in Brodipet area. She asked the DE to take steps to desilt the drain. The amenity secretaries should collect drinking water samples and record the quality in the files. Corporation Mohiddin Chisti, SE D Srinivas, DEE Srinivas Reddy, Ramesh Babu, AE Rambabu and secretariat secretaries were among those who accompanied her.

Lawyers boycott courts protesting against attack on a lawyer

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Lawyers here, Konaseema and East Godavari districts boycotted the courts on Wednesday, in response to the call given by the Andhra Lawyers association and Kakinada Bar association, in protest against the attack on a lawyer Kala Nageswara Rao. The victim was admitted to hospital for treatment. The lawyers staged a protest demonstration in front of the courts here demanding the arrest of the accused Mondu Sreenu who is at large and initiated stringent action against him to prevent recurrence of such incidents. Addressing the protesters, Bar association president Yeluri Subrah manyam said it was atrocious that an advocate was attacked for arguing a case against the accused.

Rs 22,398.98 cr annual credit plan for 2022-23 unveiled

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Disbursement of Rs 22,389.98 crore loans was set as target for the year 2022-23 in Guntur district.

The district bankers meet was held in the Collectorate here on Wednesday presided over by the Collector M Venugopal Reddy. Lead bank manager Rambabu explained to the Collector the detailed disbursement of loans for the year 2022-23.

He said that Rs 22,398.98 crore was set as target for the disbursement of loans of which Rs 11,095.97 crore would be disbursed as agriculture loans



for the financial year 2022-23. Speaking on the occasion, District Collector Venugopal Reddy said that banks across the district should provide better services to the people and increase the savings rate. He

suggested that the banks should surpass every target set by the government for the progress of the district.

The District Collector said that the 139 per cent target was reached last year. He said that

steps should be taken to extend loans to the eligible people and keep them on the path of progress.

The Collector asked the bankers to further increase the activity of digital transactions

in the district. He said banks should also be involved in the activities of village secretariats, Rythu Bharosa Kendras, and the public and private sectors.

In addition to increasing digital transactions, the man-

agement of micro-ATMs, the expansion of ATM centres, people need to take the necessary steps to manage transactions through the mobile app. He said that the bankers should take steps to make the district digitalized and should reach one hundred per cent of the targets.

He directed all banks to implement digital payment transactions in the district and implement government schemes, adding that banks should provide adequate support in the priority sector. In addition to the farmers' loans, steps should be taken to ensure timely payment of loans to ten-

ant farmers, he told the bankers. The Collector said the process of providing more loans to income-generating crops like chilli and cotton, which are well-known in Guntur district, should be taken up through the scale of the finance system.

The bankers should provide credit assistance to farmers to set up their own warehouses similar to agricultural marketing centres in rural areas. He said the state government should work with the authorities and bankers to implement at the district level the policies being put in place as part of the infrastructure creation in the

agricultural sector.

The banks should set up microfinance projects, provide loans for sanitation activities, set up solar systems and biogas units for every household, and input subsidies, the Collector told the bankers. The District Collector unveiled the 2022-23 annual credit plan brochure.

Joint Collector G Rajakumari, DCC an DLRC committee convener (Union Bank of India head) Ravi Kumar, RBI AGM Sharat Chand Doma, NABARD AGM KRD Kartik Chaitanya and Godavari Grameena Bank chairman Kameswara Rao were among those who were present.

INDIA CORNER

Maha court sentences ex-defence staffer to life imprisonment in murder

Thane, Jun 22 (PTI) A court here in Maharashtra has sentenced a former employee with a defence force to life imprisonment for killing a coolie in 2018. District Judge, Kalyan court, Shoukat Gorwade, in his order on Monday, also imposed a fine of Rs 1,000 on the accused Dhananjaykumar Sinha (58), who retired from the Navy in 2006. The designation of the accused was not mentioned in the FIR registered in the case. Additional Public Prosecutor Sachin Kulkarni told the court that the victim, Kanhu Balu Jadav (then aged 72), worked as a coolie at Khadavali railway station on the Mumbai-Kasara suburban section. He used to assist the railway staff and policemen at times to clear the mess on platforms and drive away beggars and others who created nuisance there. The accused, who lived alone, used to frequently go to the railway station and sleep on a platform bench, to which the victim had objected.



Man guns down father, brother in property dispute in UP's Azamgarh

A man in a village here allegedly shot dead his father and brother in a property dispute, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place in Dhandhari village in Kaptan ganj area here on Tuesday night, when an argument broke out between one Manoj singh and his father Shrina rain, 75, and his 35-year-old brother Manish Singh, police said. In anger, Manoj Singh shot his father and brother with his licensed pistol, killing both of them on the spot, police said. The accused also beat up his aunt with sticks when she intervened in the dispute. Superintendent of Police Anurag Arya said that the accused had retired from army a year ago and his father was also an ex-serviceman. "The incident is stated to be fallout of a property dispute. The accused has been detained and interrogation is going on," the SP said. The bodies of victims have been sent for the post mortem examination, police said.



Courts expected to pass order at earliest in matters involving personal liberty:SC

The Supreme Court has said that in a matter involving personal liberty, courts are expected to pass orders at the earliest in one way or the other taking into account the merits of the case. The apex court, while hearing a petition against a June 2 order of the Delhi High Court, observed that posting an application seeking anticipatory bail after two months cannot be appreciated. A vacation bench of Justices C T Ravikumar and Sudhanshu Dhulia noted that the petitioner's grievance is that his application for anticipatory bail moved before the high court was posted for August 31 without granting any interim protection. We are of the considered view that in a matter involving personal liberty, the court is expected to pass orders in one way or other taking into account the merits of the matter at the earliest.



‘Ready to quit, will be happy if a Shiv Sainik succeeds me’

PNS ■ MUMBAI

An emotional Uddhav Thackeray offered to quit as Maharashtra Chief Minister and extended an olive branch to rebel Shiv Sena MLAs led by Eknath Shinde, saying he will be happy if a Shiv Sainik succeeds him, adding a new twist to the ongoing political crisis that threatens to bring down his coalition government of two-and-a-half years.

Breaking his silence over the revolt led by Shinde, a cabinet minister and Sena strongman from Thane, Thackeray said he was ready to step down if the rebel leader and MLAs supporting him, all camping in Guwahati in the BJP-ruled Assam, declare that they don't want him to continue as CM.

In an 18-minute live webcast which was delayed by 30 minutes, Thackeray, who tested positive for COVID-19 earlier in the day, made an emotional appeal to the rebels as well as common



Shiv Sainiks and admitted to being inexperienced and clarified that a spine surgery late last year kept him away from meeting people.

The CM said he was ready to give up the post of party president as well if Shiv Sainiks feel he isn't capable of leading the outfit which is heading the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, which also includes the NCP and the Congress. "Why make statements from Surat

(where rebels headed first on Monday night) and other places. Come and tell me on my face that I am incompetent to handle the post of Chief Minister and Shiv Sena president. I will resign immediately. I will keep my resignation letter ready and you can come and take it to the Raj Bhavan," he said.

The CM said he would be happy if a Shiv Sainik succeeds him to the top constitutional post. Recalling the events of

In 56 years, Shiv Sena faces 4th rebellion; 1st under Uddhav's watch

Despite being a party of committed cadres with unflinching loyalty to leadership of the day, the Shiv Sena has been vulnerable to rebellions in its ranks and it has seen revolts by prominent figures on four occasions, three of them under the watch of its charismatic founder Bal Thackeray, with Eknath Shinde becoming the latest leader to join the list. The rebellion by Shinde, a Cabinet minister who has walked away with a bunch of Shiv Sena MLAs, is most significant in the outfit's 56-year-old history as it threatens to bring down the party-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra, while the other revolts took place when it was not in power in the state. The present revolt, which started taking shape post Monday midnight after Legislative Council poll results, throws a big challenge before Maharashtra Chief Minister and Sena president Uddhav Thackeray as the three previous revolts took place when his father Bal Thackeray was still around.

November 2019 when the MVA took shape, Thackeray said he agreed to become CM despite his political inexperience after NCP president Sharad Pawar suggested him to take up the job.

The MVA came into existence despite the Congress and the NCP being Shiv Sena's political adversaries for sever-

al decades, he said. Thackeray said he was shocked at the ongoing political developments in the state, which started on Monday night when Shinde (58) raised a banner of revolt and landed in a hotel in Surat, around 280km from Mumbai, with a bunch of disgruntled MLAs.

Two children die as tanker crashes into them

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A three-year-old boy and his cousin sister were killed when a tanker transporting bitumen hit them while they were waiting at a traffic signal to cross a busy street in suburban Chembur, police said on Wednesday.

Rishi Gupta and Srishti Gupta (2) were killed when they were crossing the road near a hotel on Tuesday afternoon, an official said, adding that Srishti's mother Ranjana suffered injuries to her legs.

Ranjana was taking Srishti for a medical check-up with

a doctor and asked Rishi to accompany them. "Ranjana, Srishti, and Rishi were standing at a traffic signal to cross the road when the tanker driver lost his control over the vehicle which rammed into the trio. They were rushed to a hospital by local people where Srishti and Rishi were declared dead," the official said.

Tanker driver Rajendra Purohit was arrested under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) including 304-A (causing death by negligence). Further investigation is underway, the official added.

5 cops, home guard stabbed inside police station in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Five policemen and a home guard were stabbed by a man inside a police station in east Delhi's Shahdara on Wednesday, officials said.

The incident took place on the third floor of cyber police station, Shahdara, they said. The man is being questioned, police said.

According to police, the man entered the police station and started recording a video. When he was obstructed by one of the policemen and asked the reason behind

recording the video, the man suddenly took out a knife and stabbed the personnel one after the other.

All the injured policemen and the home guard were rushed to hospital where they are being treated.

One of the cops sustained injuries on his chest and is critical, they said.

Meanwhile, the man later claimed that he was a complainant, but no complaint copy was found with him.

Police said he also banged his head against the wall and sustained minor injuries.



As per preliminary enquiry, only one person is suspected to be involved in the incident, a

senior officer said. Further investigation into the incident is underway, he said.

Sonia seeks more time for appearing before ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who was hospitalised for over a week for COVID-19 complications, on Wednesday wrote to the Enforcement Directorate seeking postponement of her appearance in the National Herald case by a few weeks till she recovers completely. The 75-year-old Congress leader, who was discharged from hospital on June 20, had been summoned by the agency for questioning on June 23 in the money laundering case related to the newspaper. Her son and former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi has already been quizzed by the probe agency for over five



days. Sonia Gandhi had earlier been scheduled to appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on June 8 but had sought more time from the probe agency in view of her COVID-19 infection. The agency had then issued a fresh summons.

Uma Bharti urges Oppn Prez candidate Sinha to withdraw nomination

PNS ■ BHOPAL

BJP leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Uma Bharti on Wednesday urged Yashwant Sinha, who is opposition parties' candidate for the July 18 presidential election, to withdraw his nomination "if he believed in what he used to

say" when he was in the saffron party earlier. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on Tuesday named Droupadi Murmu, a tribal leader from Odisha, as its candidate, while former Union minister Sinha was declared as a joint nominee by major opposition parties, including the Congress, the

NCP and the TMC. Sinha, who served in the cabinet of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had quit the saffron party in 2018 following serious differences with the party leadership. Taking to Twitter, Bharti said Sinha was once the part of the BJP's think-tank and everyone used to follow his suggestions.

Moosewala murder: Bishnoi's remand extended

PNS ■ MANSA

A court here on Tuesday evening extended police remand of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, who was brought to Punjab by the state police from Delhi last week for questioning in connection with the Punjab singer Sidhu Moosewala murder case.

The court extended Bishnoi's remand by five days, sources said. The gangster, who was

questioned at the Crime Investigation Agency office in Kharar near Chandigarh, was brought here in a bullet-proof vehicle under heavy police escort. The sources said that the police had sought Bishnoi's 10-day remand. After Bishnoi was brought from Delhi, he was produced before a court in Mansa that had then remanded him to seven-day police custody. An official statement issued

here last week said Lawrence Bishnoi has been named as an accused and conspirator in the murder case of the singer.

A Delhi court had last week granted the Punjab Police the transit remand of Bishnoi to take him to Punjab in the case. The Special Investigation Team constituted to probe the Moosewala murder case has questioned him at length in the case, the sources said.



Assam flood situation grim, 55 lakh people hit

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The flood situation in Assam continued to remain grim with rising water levels of the Brahmaputra and Barak rivers inundating fresh areas in the state and impacting over 55 lakh people across 32 districts, officials said on Wednesday.

Eighty-nine people have lost their lives since mid-May due to deluge, they said.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma travelled to Nagaon by train to review the situation in flood-hit areas in the district, the officials said, adding that he was also scheduled to visit a few relief camps there. Nagaon was severely affected by the current wave of floods with over 4,57,381 people coming under the impact of



the deluge and 15,188 inmates have taken shelter in 147 relief camps.

"Undertook a train journey from Guwahati to flood-affected areas in Chaparmukh and Kampur. The journey enabled

me to take a closer look at the areas ravaged by flood along the railway tracks, which will help us in taking informed decisions and intervene accordingly," Sarma said on Twitter. As the floodwaters of Kopili

have inundated large areas in Nagaon district, necessary steps will be taken to prevent the recurrence of such calamity in the future, he said. Sarma visited Chaparmukh railway station to interact with flood-

affected people taking shelter there and took stock of relief materials provided to them. "Assuring them all possible help, I asked district administration to ensure adequate relief to the affected people & be on stand-by," he said.

The flood situation in three districts of the Barak Valley - Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi remained critical with rising water levels of the Barak and Kushiara rivers inundating vast tracts of land in the valley, the officials said.

National Disaster Response Force personnel have been engaged in Cachar districts to evacuate people to safe places, while representatives of State Disaster Response Force and other agencies were deployed in the two remaining districts.

Mandaviya to chair high-level review on rising COVID-19 cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will on Friday chair a high-level review meeting with the core team of experts over increasing cases of COVID-19 in the country, official sources said. India has been witnessing an increase in coronavirus infections over the last couple of weeks. As on date, 10 states -- Maharashtra, Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Gujarat -- have over 1,000 active cases.

The core team of experts will include AIIMS director Dr Randip Guleria, ICMR Director



General Dr Balram Bhargava and NCDC director Sujet Singh. Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary of Department of Biotechnology Rajesh S Gokhale, Secretary in the Department of Pharmaceuticals S Aparna, among others, will also attend the meeting. In

a review meeting of INSACOG held last week, states/UTs were asked to submit "larger number" of samples for whole genome sequencing from districts and areas which had seen a surge in COVID-19 cases over a period of seven days.

The direction was issued to check the possibility of any new emerging variant or sub-variant and ascertain the reasons behind the breakthrough infections.

According to the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) experts, Omicron and its sublineages, primarily BA. 2 and BA.2.38, as of now, seem to be behind the current rise in Covid cases, an official source said.

First among equals

The NDA holds a distinct advantage as the presidential election nears

The ruling National Democratic Alliance has selected former Jharkhand Governor Droupadi Murmu as its presidential candidate. “I am surprised as well as delighted. As a tribal woman from remote Mayurbhanj district, I had not thought about becoming the candidate for the top post,” she said at her Rairangpur residence. It did not come as a big surprise to political commentators though, for it was widely speculated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi may opt for a person from either the tribal community or other backward classes (OBCs). All other major groups — Muslims, Dalits, Sikhs, women — have been represented. By choosing her as its presidential candidate, the BJP-led NDA expected to get support not just from the



MPs and MLAs from tribals but also from Odisha, her native State. The BJD, which is in power in Odisha, holds over 2.8 per cent of representation in the electoral college that will elect the President. “I am optimistic of support from all members of the Odisha Assembly and MPs,” she said, “I am daughter of the soil. I have the right to request all members to support me as an Odia.” Her optimism is well-grounded. Odisha Chief Minister and BJD boss Naveen Patnaik is favourably inclined towards her candidature. He tweeted: “Congratulations Smt #DraupadiMurmurmu on being announced as candidate of NDA for the country’s highest office. I was

delighted when Hon’ble PM @narendramodi ji discussed this with me. It is indeed a proud moment for people of #Odisha.” This will help her — and the NDA.

Equally important is the support she has got from Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. “We express happiness at the candidature of Droupadi Murmu for President. She is a tribal woman and it is a matter of great happiness that a tribal woman is the candidate for the highest position in the country,” Nitish Kumar said. At any rate, the top BJP leadership is active and adroit enough to have its way, as evident from the political storm raging in Maharashtra. This is bad news for the Opposition which had propped up former BJP leader Yashwant Sinha as its presidential candidate. Opposition politicians had hoped that if somehow they managed to get their candidate occupy Rashtrapati Bhawan, it would not only add momentum to the campaign to eventually oust the BJP from office. That seems to be very difficult today; developments in Maharashtra have shown that not just the anti-BJP coalition is precarious but also that Opposition leaders are flatfooted. On the other hand, the BJP top brass calibrated all its moves. Supporting a tribal woman can be criticised as tokenism, but then it is not the first time tokenism has affected presidential poll; in 2007, for instance, the Congress selected Pratibha Patil, who was not a political heavyweight or household name, as its candidate. The BJP has been playing that game, and bagging rich dividends. And it is likely to get the President of its own choice.

PICTALK



A view of the swollen Jhelum river following incessant rain, in Srinagar

Gulf nations must avow India’s step

The Government has asserted its respect for all religions while the Gulf countries have often been suspect in establishing their secular credentials



VIVEK GUMASTE

The *démarche* issued by a host of Islamic nations with regard to the unfortunate Nupur Sharma incident had stirred up a hornet’s nest in India and unleashed a welter of emotions. An ugly cocktail of shame, embarrassment, anger and frustration swirled and vitiated the air. There have been concerns about India’s international image; some have rued over its impact on trade with the Arab world.

A former BJP leader sanctimoniously claimed that India’s “image has now come crashing down”. He further averred that “...(It) caused grievous damage to our image as a liberal, secular democracy...”. But is this really so? Do we need to feel ashamed? And did this controversy erode our credibility as a liberal secular democracy?

We, as Indians, suffer from a deep-set flaw in our psyche; a profound lack of self-esteem and self-confidence that stems from not knowing who we are! So much so that even when two-bit nations with a combined moral quotient of zero pass adverse remarks about us, we go into a tizzy and subject ourselves to an endless bout of self-loathing. Nothing illustrates this phenomenon better than our current response.

First, one person’s aberration, even if the individual belongs to the ruling party, cannot indict an entire nation, its people and its Government. Second, the Government did act to rectify the indecorum by asserting its respect for all religions and by suspending the errant office bearer. Nupur Sharma has since apologised for her remarks.

Next, let us take a closer look at those Muslim countries that are hectoring India on morality. These include Kuwait, Qatar, Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Jordan, Bahrain, Maldives, Malaysia, Oman, Iraq and Libya. The majority of them are autocracies which designate Islam as the official religion; a caveat that automatically relegates all other religions to second-class status.

Countries like Saudi Arabia



prohibit the construction of non-Muslim places of worship; in other Gulf countries, non-Muslims have to seek Government permission. These countries do not even afford non-Muslims the basic courtesy of dignity in death. Kuwait and Qatar do not allow cremations forcing non-Muslims to fly dead bodies out of the country to their native places. And let us not forget that Qatar is the country that indirectly endorsed MF Hussain’s blasphemy against Hindu gods by honouring him with a citizenship.

In contrast, despite all the criticism that the Modi Government has been subject to, both at home and abroad, and despite all the talk of Hindu hyper-nationalism, we still remain a liberal democratic country par excellence that treats all its citizens equally. Muslims have the same rights as any Hindu. They have access to the same educational institutions, same job opportunities, the same health facilities and are beneficiaries of the same ration cards. They can build their own mosques and pray unhindered in these. We cannot be shamed by countries whose record on religious freedom is ques-



THE MAJORITY OF THESE MUSLIM COUNTRIES ARE AUTOCRACIES WHICH DESIGNATE ISLAM AS THE OFFICIAL RELIGION; A CAVEAT THAT AUTOMATICALLY RELEGATES ALL OTHER RELIGIONS TO SECOND-CLASS STATUS

tionable. We need to be confident in our own skin and answerable to ourselves alone as the bearers of an ancient moral civilisation.

Coming to the question of trade, the Gulf Cooperation Council (consisting of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) is a major trading partner with exports of \$44 billion and imports worth \$110 billion (2021-22). About a third of India’s crude oil needs (Saudi Arabia 18 per cent; UAE nine per cent and Kuwait five per cent) are supplied by the Gulf countries. However, since the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the equation is fast changing. Crude oil supplies from Russia have dramatically shot up reaching 3.36 million metric tonnes in May 2022 — a nine-fold monthly increase compared to 2021. India’s dependence on oil from Gulf countries is significant but can be balanced by increasing supplies from Russia.

On the flip side, the Gulf countries are overwhelmingly dependent on India for their food needs. Specifically, India accounts for 84 per cent, 91 per cent and 80 per cent of Qatar’s, Kuwait’s and Iran’s rice

requirements. So, vulnerability due to trade disruption extends to both sides.

What is most concerning is that this outrage has emboldened terrorists to threaten India with attacks and encouraged anti-social elements amongst India’s Muslims? It has led to calls for beheading on national television, rioting through the streets and obscene calls for Hindu genocide from mosque tops. The Government of India has done the right thing to defuse the crisis by reiterating its respect for all religions and by suspending the errant office bearers.

The Gulf countries too must step up to the plate. After having vented their disapproval publicly, they must now show maturity if they do not want the narrative to be hijacked by radical fundamentalists. To put an end to the matter, they need to release another statement that welcomes the Indian Government’s actions and acknowledges India as a genuinely secular nation.

(The author, a US-based academic and political commentator, frequently writes on current affairs in India. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

START AGNIPATH ON TRIAL BASIS

Sir — While working out the financial benefits of the Agnipath scheme, national security concerns and administrative feasibility cannot be brushed aside. The moot question is whether after completing four years in uniform, they will be able to withstand the pressures of unemployment. These well-trained youths can easily be lured, recruited and exploited by anti-social elements, creating newer challenges after completing their tenure. There is no gain saying that the new recruitment scheme for jawans is being pushed in a hurry to counter the rising discontentment among the unemployed youth and ever-growing resentment against the Government.

Another rational way of revisiting the Agnipath scheme is to downsize the Army, as China did in 2015 by giving 2.3 lakh soldiers VRS as part of its modernisation drive. The poor execution of SPARSH is a case in point. The new pension system for the armed forces veterans, which was launched with much fanfare in 2021 for post-2015 retirees, also ended in a fiasco as on May 1, almost 60,000 ex-servicemen were kept deprived of their pension. Taking lessons from its poor execution, it is essential to run Agnipath on a trial basis first.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

RADICAL REFORMS AFTER CONSULTATIONS

Sir — This refers to ‘Some reforms may look unfair at first, but help nation in long run: Modi’ (June 21). The PM’s statement is relevant because it comes against the backdrop of widespread protests against the Agnipath scheme. Irrespective of the merits and demerits of the scheme, it has turned into a burning issue. Also, it is difficult to ignore the fact that this is the third big reform by the Modi-led Government to face such serious opposition. The land reform Bill in its first term and the farm reforms Bill in its second term were withdrawn to avert likely electoral losses despite there being enough reasons to persist with these.

Comments malign Cong’s image



Union Minister of Congress, Subodh Kant Sahai. It’s a sad state of affairs. The Congress has been an old national party. It has had a golden history. But today, the language the senior Congress leaders are using in public meetings is not in any way in the interest of the party.

What derogatory remarks are being made by the leaders about certain constitutional posts, they don’t even care about it. The Congress has ruled the country for more than 60 years and all that has been possible only because of the nation’s people. It has also been the tradition of Congress to respect the sentiments of the same people. The Prime Minister is not only a leader of a political party, his is a constitutional post, leading the country in the world. Insulting any constitutional post does not suit the leaders of a national party like the Congress. Such statements will only hurt the image of the Congress.

Rajender Kumar Sharma | Haryana

The issues that these two aborted reforms set out to address remain, and are likely to have a detrimental impact on the Indian economy. While it is possible the opposition to such reforms was inevitable, it is also possible that their intensity might have been diminished through a consultative process involving all stakeholders, an elaborate detailing of the contours of the reforms. However, when it comes to the adoption of radical reforms, good intentions and a majority in Parliament may not necessarily translate into instant and universal acceptance.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

NEED TO HARMONISE WITH TECH

Sir — With great admiration and belief in the columns of your newspaper, I seek to bring to your attention the fast-growing menace of tech addiction and the resultant health scares among the youth of our country. Today, we are able to enjoy some of the most convenient gadgets to have ever existed, which offer far more information and

sources of entertainment than any other. As a result, the upcoming generation has been becoming increasingly information-heavy. The number of hours an average person spends in gaining information, whether wanted or unwanted, is fast increasing, with a screen in front of our eyes showing us new wonders every minute.

And on top of that, the wonders are as per choice and preferences. All this temptation often leads young children to spend much more time on these gadgets than what’s healthy. And even though we may not realise it instantly, it levies a huge load of tiredness on our brains and eyes, often leading to inexplicable stress and irritability. Hence, through the pages of your esteemed newspaper, I would like to appeal to the youth worldwide to maintain a balance of all spheres of life to fully enjoy it.

Divyansha Sharma | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

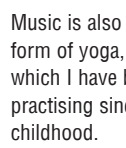
Many reforms in the present may seem unpleasant... but over time, there are benefits.



Prime Minister —Narendra Modi



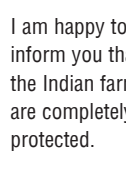
Afghan ambassador —Farid Mamundzay



Singer —Sukhwinder Singh



India chief coach —Rahul Dravid



Commerce Minister —Piyush Goyal

Trouble next door

India will do well to learn lessons from the goings-on in its immediate neighbourhood

There are several political developments taking place in our neighbourhood, and all of these portend to our own polity, what may be wrong with it, or what should be corrected. Sri Lanka is burning. Pakistan is in the black. Afghanistan remains simmering under its newfound cloak of civility. Nepal, under the new Prime Minister, has just about found its step after the former communist-leaning Premier was ousted. The suffocating situation in Myanmar is also nothing new. Now Kuwait’s crown prince has dissolved Parliament and called for an early election following a stand-off between the Government and elected Assembly that has hindered fiscal reform. Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah has said that the decree would be issued for the dissolution of Parliament, the Gulf region’s oldest. Even the ruling Emir of Kuwait has blessed the dissolution move. The Opposition lawmakers are staging an open-ended sit-in since last week at the Parliament complex to press Sheikh Meshal to name a new Prime Minister to replace the caretaker Premier who has faced a combative Parliament. The political crisis, which has blocked the country’s economic and social progress, seems to be worsening.



Meanwhile, in Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe admitted in Parliament that its economy has “completely collapsed” and an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is the only path to revival. While it is a fact that the island nation faces a far more serious situation beyond mere shortages of fuel, gas, electricity and food, any financial rescue plan with the IMF is not expected until Colombo agrees with its creditors on restructuring its \$51 billion foreign debt, which could take months. The country first defaulted on its debt in April and went cap-in-hand to the IMF, which asked Colombo to raise taxes and restructure loss-making state enterprises, but it made people angrier. To soothe the seething population, Sri Lanka’s Cabinet has approved an amendment to the Constitution that could curtail presidential powers. Besides, Sri Lanka’s Parliament sessions will be restricted to two days this week instead of four days amid the current fuel supply crisis. The situation in India is no better. Unemployment is rampant, inflation is rising, growth is slowing and the nation is seemingly in the throes of lumpen elements that threaten to derail our foreign relations anytime. We must seriously be on our guard!

FIRST COLUMN

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE TO STRENGTHEN UNITY

India already has a fairly uniform set of laws



RAJENDRA PRASAD GUPTA

In a country as diverse as India, a lot has changed during the 75 years of Independence. India is continuously climbing the ladder of success. The country is asserting itself as a major economic and military power. In such a milieu, there is an urgent need that India, like other nations, strengthens the initiative of national integration by passing a uniform civil code.

The criminal code, civil procedure code, the Special Marriage Act, etc., apply uniformly to all citizens. Barring a few exceptions, India has a fairly uniform set of laws.

The British government had entrusted the responsibility of initiating a uniform civil code to Warren Hasting in 1772 when he was conferred the civil, judicial and administrative responsibility. Later, the British government emphasised the need to compile the codification of Indian laws on various subjects in 1835, with a few exceptions.

Article 25 of the Indian Constitution gives us freedom of conscience and freedom to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion, including the protection of our cultural diversity. At the same time, there is Article 44, which upholds a "uniform civil code" for citizens. It is part of the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution.

In order to bring uniformity in law, various courts have often said in their judgments that the government should strive towards ensuring a uniform civil code.



With the passage of time, many laws have been changed in India. The demand for a uniform civil code has also been going on since the time of Independence. In fact, even the framers of the Constitution had deliberated on it, but it was put on hold due to opposition by the Muslim representatives.

India will not be the first nation to implement a uniform civil code. The US, Canada, and European nations as well as many Islamic countries like Turkey, Indonesia, and Sudan have uniform civil codes.

By promoting the politics of appeasement in India, a select few fundamentalist organisations, which are protected by political parties, are engaged in dividing the country. If one looks at the developments in history, one will find that since Independence these organisations have been involved in anti-national activities. Many conspiracies have been hatched for the purpose of precluding a uniform civil code. Owing to vote bank politics, top leaders of many major political parties started fear-mongering, telling the Muslim community that a uniform civil code would violate their rights as enshrined in the Constitution.

These politicians forget that the same Constitution has also talked about implementing a uniform civil code. They should also be aware that a uniform civil code has been in force in Goa for years, which has proved to be effective in maintaining harmony and a peaceful environment, and accelerating development there.

Therefore, it would be better if today we make meaningful efforts to solve the problem and not leave it to the future. This step will also be commendable and in tune with the motto of 'One Nation and One Legislation.'

For this it is necessary that the Centre, Parliament and state governments agree on this issue to develop a national consensus. While preserving cultural diversity, it is necessary that no person should be discriminated against. As far as possible, there should be the same law in India and a uniform civil code.

Several pending issues like triple talaq, Article 370, and Ram Mandir have been addressed in the last few years. This has raised hope that uniform civil code will also become a reality.

(The author, a professor, is the vice-president of BJP in Bihar and a member of Bihar Legislative Council)

BJP's foreign outreach serves national interest

The outreach is an exercise to realise democratic ideals and reach out to those uninitiated and curious about our country



SUMET BHASIN



BIASES, PREJUDICES, AND PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES THAT THE BJP HAS SOUGHT TO ADDRESS IN ITS OUTREACH TO DIVERSE AUDIENCES. 'KNOW BJP' IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE RULING PARTY

(The author is Director, the Public Policy Research Centre, the BJP's principal think tank; twitter at @sumetbhasin)



motion by former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Jaswant Singh-Strobe Talbott dialogue, which went on for several years, had laid the foundation for the Indian pivot in Asia for the US, which also augmented the global outreach of India.

Notably, former BJP chief and deputy PM LK Advani had set in motion the party's foreign outreach by creating a foreign cell and the overseas friends of the BJP, which are playing important roles in the outreach, who in turn have become vocal advocates of Indian national interest. Deployment of technology for outreach by the BJP in the last one decade by tapping the full potential of social media platforms has given a boost unseen in the past.

Vajpayee, being a true democrat, had the idea to connect with the Indian diaspora to tap their growing influence to work for the Indian national interest. Needless to say, increase in the Indian outreach with foreign capitals corresponds with the rise in the politico-economic clout of the Indian diaspora.

In PM Modi, the Indian diaspora got the perfect voice for Indian national interest. Predictably, the interactions with the diaspora are a regular feature during his foreign visits. So, while Vajpayee laid the foundation for the connect with the world, Modi has upgraded it by building a grand edifice of an India that's connected with every corner of the world—from developed countries to island nations, from the African continent to the developing nations and the immediate neighbourhood. He has deployed full resources to build relationships of

a reliable and dependable friend.

For many, the BJP is a relatively new political party, for they have been used to seeing Congress in power for decades. The BJP gained full majority in the Lok Sabha only in 2014 under the leadership of Modi. This happened again in the 2019 general election. While Vajpayee led the government within the coalition limitations, PM Modi has the unprecedented popular mandate to unlock India's fullest potential. The Modi-led government at the Centre has carried out a legislative agenda which was earlier seen as impossible.

Revocation of Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Then the archaic practice of triple talaq among the Muslims was discarded; this caught the attention of many in the world. Such political will to carry out hard reforms is tough to find even among many world leaders. This fuels curiosity of foreign commentators in the BJP and its leadership; this has necessitated a creative outreach strategy, so that we could keep pace with the fast-changing global narrative.

The outbreak of Covid-19 tested the characters of national leaders of several countries. India with over one billion population was seen by many as too vulnerable to the deadly pandemic. But the incumbent Indian leadership proved equal to the task; in fact, it excelled in its response with two made in India vaccines that shielded not just Indians but millions in several countries. The neighbouring countries remained solely dependent on India.

PM led the outreach at the policy front, holding consultations with the scientific community to find answers to the looming challenges in the form of Covid-19. India showcased why the country is the pharma capital of the world, with the Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro expressing gratitude for the medicines and vaccines by equating the efforts with Hanuman carrying the 'Sanjeevani Booti' for injured Lakshman.

The BJP's outreach with the poor during such trying times shaped the party's deep social drive in the form of distribution of dry ration kits to millions of people during lockdowns and thereafter. BJP workers ran community kitchens across the country. Blending of the social and political work further helped the endeavour.

Dialogue and dissemination are in the DNA of the BJP and its parent organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Foreign commentators have their misgivings about the RSS and the BJP because of the long-term narratives fed to them by the political rivals and the well-entrenched 'Left-liberal ecosystem.'

RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat held extensive interactions with the representatives of the foreign media at Vigyan Bhavan a few years ago where he responded to all the questions. He explained to them the worldview and functioning of the organisation.

The BJP leaders have their ears to the ground; outreach helps them know the pulse of the people. They are not the prisoners of history; they are willing to walk the tough road.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WE HAVE OPENED UP THE SPACE AND THE DEFENCE SECTORS WHICH, FOR DECADES, WERE UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL. —PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 75 YEARS, SERVICE CHIEFS ARE BEING FRONTED TO DEFEND A GOVERNMENT'S POLICY DECISION. —LEADER OF OPINION IN THE RAJYA SABHA MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

South Africa: Anti-graft Prez faces scam charges

A politically-linked former spy hurled some not-very-convincing charges at President Ramaphosa, ruining latter's name



GWYNNE DYER

Once upon a time (about four years ago) Cyril Ramaphosa was seen as South Africa's last, best hope. Since the end of Apartheid in 1994, the leadership of the country's ruling African National Congress (ANC) had passed from the wise and heroic Nelson Mandela to the intellectual but ineffectual Thabo Mbeki and then to the corrupt and ignorant Jacob Zuma.

But in 2018 the fractured and demoralised ANC pulled itself together, remembered its purpose, and replaced Zuma as president with Cyril Ramaphosa. Hope soared: Ramaphosa had a long record of activism in the struggle against Apartheid; he was a former trade union leader; and he was so rich that he didn't need to be corrupt. He was the ideal candidate.

(The author's new book is The Shortest History of War)

For a while it went well. The economy didn't grow much and unemployment stayed very high, but Zuma's chief cronies fled abroad, others were charged with various crimes, and even Zuma wound up in jail. Ramaphosa was at least trying to clean up the mess—but then, two years ago, there was a burglary at his wildlife game farm in Limpopo province.

Nobody heard about it at the time, because Ramaphosa didn't mention it publicly. That's understandable, because the burglars allegedly found \$4 million in cash hidden in cushions on his sofa. That's not a good look for a president whose USP is fighting corruption, so no report was made to the police. Ramaphosa just swallowed the loss.

That's not as crazy as it sounds: Ramaphosa is one of the richest men in South Africa, and \$4 million is less than one per cent of his wealth. He could just be trying not to draw attention to it. But then, early this month, Arthur Fraser, former head of South Africa's intelligence agency, lodged a criminal complaint with the police about the affair.

Fraser said that Ramaphosa's 'presidential protection unit' (bodyguards) had tracked down the burglars, kidnapped, and interrogated them, and then bribed them to keep quiet about the cash. Maybe Ramaphosa was just trying to protect his reputation as a man of the people, but even so he would have been breaking the law. And then Fraser outed him.



The news is now out all over town, and by this week Ramaphosa was under attack from all sides. "Criminals do not report crimes when the proceeds of their crimes are stolen," as Julius Malema, leader of the opposition Economic Freedom Fighters party, put it, and a great many other people in Parliament and in the street

took the same view.

This comes at just the wrong time for Ramaphosa, who faces a leadership challenge in the ANC in December. His anti-corruption campaign within the party has not prospered, and Zuma's supporters staged riots that killed hundreds when he was jailed. Now Zuma's out of jail, and Ramaphosa is tarred with the same corruption brush himself.

There's a lot that's wrong with this story. Arthur Fraser, the former spy chief who brought the complaint against Ramaphosa, is a close ally of Zuma's. The South African President does hold regular cash auctions of his prize Ankole cattle and various game animals at his farm, but why would he hide the cash in pillows? Tax avoidance?

This is a man who has sat on literally dozens of boards and is allegedly worth \$450 million. If he wants to avoid taxes, he has lawyers aplenty; he doesn't need sofa cushions. The whole 'burglary' operation, and especially the source and the timing of the 'complaint', smells like a political sting. Nevertheless, Ramaphosa is in deep trouble.

The real object of the sting would have been to highlight Ramaphosa's great and unexplained wealth. He probably didn't break the law to get it, like Zuma did, but he didn't inherit it and he didn't earn it by hard work. He just got paid huge sums to sit on boards, and invested the proceeds wisely.

Ramaphosa got on those boards as part of the ANC-sponsored 'Black Economic

Empowerment' programme, one of whose purposes was to provide a reliable, low-profile income stream for its political work. Most of its supporters were very poor, but the chosen 'BEE' appointees were expected to donate much of their large incomes to the ANC.

It's less lurid than Zuma's route to great wealth via partnership with Indian 'entrepreneurs' in a project of 'state capture', but both men's riches come from their ties to the ANC. To the average voter in Alexandra township, the two men will look exactly the same.

That is why the ANC will probably lose its majority in Parliament in the 2024 election, after 30 years in power. High time, really, even though nobody knows what's coming out of the box next.

MONEY MATTERS

Amit Shah to address national conclave on urban cooperative banks today

Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to address a national conclave that will deliberate on the future role of the urban cooperative credit sector in the country. The conclave will discuss various issues related to Scheduled and Multi-State Urban Co-operative Banks and Credit Societies and will also felicitate Urban Cooperative Banks that have completed 100 years of service to society, an official statement said. The Minister of State for Cooperation B L Verma, Chairman Emeritus of the National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies (NAFCUB) H K Patil and senior ministry officials will be present at the event. Among other issues, the Conclave will discuss recommendations of the Reserve Bank of India's expert committee, the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2020, and its impact and developments, the role of credit societies in the financial sector scenario with special reference to multi-state societies and the issue of regulation and taxation of cooperative credit societies.



GAIL to enter distributed LNG production business

GAIL (India) Ltd, the nation's largest gas transportation and marketing firm, on Wednesday said it plans to enter into distributed Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) production to take the fuel to users. GAIL will liquefy or turn natural gas into liquid at sub-zero temperature and transport it in trucks to users. "In a first-of-its-kind endeavour in the country, GAIL plans to enter into distributed LNG production with the vision to cater to the demand from off-grid locations and the transport sector," it said in a statement. GAIL has placed an order for two small-scale liquefaction skids capable of producing LNG on a pilot basis. Liquefaction will be achieved through proprietary technology-based mobile liquefaction kids. "These plants will help in the distribution of natural gas through liquefaction in new cities areas, liquefaction of gas at isolated fields and will support setting up of LNG fueling stations and bunkering."



Sebi sends Rs 5 lakh notice to Future Enterprises in disclosure lapses case

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday sent a notice to Future Enterprises asking it to pay over Rs 5 lakh in a matter pertaining to disclosure lapses about initiation of arbitration proceedings against Future Group by Amazon. The regulator also warned the company of attachment of assets and bank accounts if it fails to make the payment within 15 days. The notice came after the company failed to pay the fine imposed on it by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). In an order passed in March, the capital markets regulator had slapped a fine of Rs 5 lakh on Future Enterprises for disclosure lapses in the case related to arbitration proceedings against Future Group by Amazon.com NV Investments Holdings LLC. Future Enterprises failed to disclose to the exchanges the information regarding the initiation of arbitration proceedings and also the passing of an order dated October 25, 2020 in favour of Amazon.



RBI Guv flags continued high inflation as 'a major concern'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has cautioned that continued high inflation is a major concern for the economy, even as economic activities are gaining traction while voting for a 50 basis points hike in key interest rate to check price rise earlier this month, as per minutes of the meeting released by the central bank on Wednesday.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by Das, had announced its decision on June 8. It was the second consecutive hike in repo rate.

As per the minutes of the three-day meeting, the Governor said while high inflation continues to be the major concern, revival of economic activity remains steady and is gaining traction.



"The time is appropriate to go for a further increase in the policy rate to effectively deal with inflation and inflation expectations."

"Accordingly, I vote for a 50 bps increase in the repo rate which would be in line with the

evolving inflation-growth dynamics and will help in mitigating the second round effects of adverse supply shocks," he said.

The rate hike, he said, will reinforce RBI's commitment to price stability -- its primary

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mandate and a pre-requisite for sustainable growth over the medium term.

All the six members had voted to increase the policy repo rate by 50 basis points (bps) to 4.9 per cent.

ITC FMCG business' annual consumer spend over Rs 24,000 cr in FY22

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

ITC recorded an annual consumer spend of over Rs 24,000 crore in FY22 in the FMCG business, wherein the company operates with over 25 mother brands in segments including food, personal care, education and stationery, as per its latest annual report. The FMCG business of ITC has grown at an "impressive pace" over the past several years and achieved impressive market standing in a relatively short span of time, said the company which still gets around half of its revenue from tobacco business. ITC portfolio of "over 25 world-class Indian brands, largely built through an organic growth strategy in a relatively short period of time, represents an annual consumer spend of over Rs 24,000 crore and reach over 200 million households in India," the annual report said.

India needs \$223 bn to meet 2030 renewable capacity goals

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India will need USD 223 billion of investment to meet its goal of wind and solar capacity installations by 2030, according to a new report by research company BloombergNEF (BNEF).

The government has set a target of increasing non-fossil power capacity to 500 GW by 2030. It wants non-fossil fuel power sources to provide half of its electricity supply by 2030.

"To achieve this target, India needs to massively scale up funding for renewables," the report said, adding that USD 223 billion is required over the next eight years just to meet the solar and wind capacity targets.

At COP26 in November 2021, Prime Minister



Narendra Modi announced that India plans to reduce emission intensity by more than 45 per cent by 2030 to below 2005 levels. He also announced a net-zero by 2070 target.

The report 'Financing India's 2030 Renewables Ambition', published in association with the Power Foundation of India, found

that corporate commitments from Indian companies could help India achieve 86 per cent of its 2030 goals of building 500GW of cumulative non-fossil power generation capacity, a statement issued by BNEF said.

By 2021, 165 GW of zero-carbon generation had already been installed in the country.

Domestic air passenger traffic grows nearly five-fold in May

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Domestic air passenger traffic saw a strong recovery in demand as Indian carriers flew 1.20 crore passengers on the local routes in May, logging nearly five-fold year-on-year volume growth, DGCA data showed on Wednesday.

Domestic air passenger traffic in May 2021 stood at a meager 21-lakh, as per the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) data.

Of the total 1.20 crore passengers flown by the domestic carriers in May 2022, market leader IndiGo transported around 70 lakh with 57.9 per cent market share, followed by Mumbai-based carrier Go First with 12.76 lakh passengers, accounting for 10.8 per cent of the total domestic traffic.

The two full-service carriers -- Air India and Vistara, which are part of the Tata



Group along with no-frills AirAsia India -- carried 8.23 lakh and 9.83 lakh passengers, respectively, in the previous month.

AirAsia India flew 6.86 lakh passengers across the domestic routes in May 2022, the DGCA said.

During the reporting month, budget carrier SpiceJet delivered the highest load factor at 89.1 per cent followed by Go First at 86.5 per cent, as per the monthly data.

In aviation parlance, pas-

senger Load Factor or Seat Factor is a measure of how much of an airline's passenger carrying capacity is used or average percentage of seats filled in an aircraft.

In terms of On-Time Performance (OTP), AirAsia India, had its maximum number of flights operating on time with an OTP of 90.8 per cent across four key airports.

Vistara had the second best OTP at 87.5 per cent in the month under review, DGCA said.

GMR Power and Urban Infra acquires 100 pc stake in GMR Green Energy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

GMR Power and Urban Infra on Wednesday said it has acquired 100 per cent stake in GMR Green Energy Private Ltd from GMR Solar Energy Private Ltd.

GMR Green Energy was incorporated in 2022 with the objective to pursue opportunities in the green energy business. It is yet to commence commercial operations.

"GMR Power and Urban Infra Ltd has acquired 100 per cent stake in GMR Green Energy Private Ltd (GGEPL) from GMR Solar Energy Private Ltd (GSEPL) a fellow subsidiary," it said in a BSE filing. The company has acquired the entire 50,000 equity shares of GGEPL at face value of Rs 10 each for an aggregate cash consideration of Rs 5 lakh on June 21, 2022, it added.

DHFL scam: 'Bandra Books' under CBI lens in Rs 34,615 crore bank fraud

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Dewan Housing Finance Limited allegedly maintained 1,81,664 ghost retail loan accounts having liability of over Rs 14,000 crore which were kept in a parallel set of accounts database known as Bandra Books', officials said.

The Union Bank of India (UBI) had approached the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) with its complaint that the non-banking finance company DHFL disbursed loans worth over Rs 14,000 crore as Project Finance' which were shown as retail loans in their books to project an inflated retail loan portfolio for the company.

Based on this complaint, the probe agency booked then DHFL chairman-cum-managing director Kapil Wadhawan and others in one of the biggest bank frauds in India amounting to over Rs 34,615 crore.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), in its report, had also



expressed apprehension that approvals and fund disbursement in respect of Bandra Books were done with nod from Kapil Wadhawan.

According to the complaint, now part of the new FIR, the records of these non-existent retail loans with an outstanding aggregating to Rs 14,095 crore known as Bandra Books' were maintained in parallel book of accounts by creating a logical partition in the Enterprise Resource Planning software used for book keeping and loan management, officials said.

The parallel database of non-genuine retail loans was maintained by Senior Vice President (Special Projects) of DHFL Jayesh Khona, who was assisted by Sangeeta Amin and Priya Naik pertained to Bandra branch of the company -- a virtual branch, they said.

The aforesaid retail loans, referred to as Bandra Books', were maintained in a separate database in Foxpro Software, against which loans were shown as disbursed by Dewan Housing Finance Limited (DHFL) and were subsequently merged with OLPL (Other Large Project) Loans, the bank has alleged.

Companies are increasing their appetite for data-based insights to better gauge buyer intent and drive greater sales, especially amidst the ongoing 'great reshuffle' when buyers and sellers are constantly considering shifting roles, the LinkedIn sixth edition of the 'APAC State of Sales 2022' report stated. In fact, more than eight in 10 (84 per cent) sales professionals in India have lost at least one deal to an important decision maker changing roles in the past year alone. Therefore, access to the right intel has become mission-critical for sales functions across the board, the report opined.

73 pc of sellers in India rely on sales technology at least once a week: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

With the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting the sales process, around 73 per cent of sellers surveyed are using technology at least once a week to get access to real-time data to drive sales, says a report.

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No purchase of coal from Russia after April 20: Tata Steel

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Steel has not made any purchase of PCI coal from Russia post its April announcement of severing business ties with Russia amid the ongoing conflict with Ukraine, a company spokesperson said on Wednesday.

On April 20, Tata Steel had said it would stop doing business with Russia. To ensure business continuity, all its steel manufacturing sites in India, the UK and the Netherlands have sourced alternative supplies of raw materials to end its dependence on Russia. "Tata Steel would like to issue a clarification

in view of the incorrect information floating around in some sections of the media with respect to the buying/ importing of coal from Russia," the spokesperson said.

A deal for supply of 75,000 tonne of PCI coal was finalised in March 2022 and the contract became effective weeks before Tata Steel's April announcement.

The pulverised coal is used by steelmakers in the blast furnace (BF) as an auxiliary fuel. Pulverised Coal Injection (PCI) is a process that involves injecting large volumes of fine coal particles into the raceway of the BF.



Airtel Africa issues tender offer to clear US \$ 300 mn debt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel International (Netherlands) BV, which manages Airtel's Africa business, has issued a tender offer to buy back up to USD 300 million (about Rs 2,348 crore) of senior notes, the country's second largest telecom company said on Wednesday.

The company's tender offer to purchase USD 300 million worth of its 5.35 per cent guaranteed senior notes of USD 1 billion due 2024 has

commenced from June 21 and will expire on July 19, 2022, Bharti Airtel said in a regulatory filing.

"The purpose of the Tender Offer is for the Company to optimize its balance sheet and reduce debt," the filing said.

Consolidated net debt excluding lease obligations for Bharti Airtel stood at Rs 1,23,544 crore as of March 31, 2022, compared to Rs 1,15,512.4 crore in the year-ago period.

Markets resume downward spiral after 2-day pause

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices resumed their slide on Wednesday after a two-day breather, pressured by profit-taking at higher levels and a sell-off in global markets.

The rupee slumped to record lows amid unrelenting foreign fund outflows, which further weighed on sentiment, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 709.54 points or 1.35 per cent to close at 51,822.53. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty fell 225.50 points

or 1.44 per cent to 15,413.30. Tata Steel was the biggest laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding 5.24 per cent, followed by Wipro, Reliance Industries, IndusInd Bank, HCL Technologies, Bajaj Finserv, Titan and Bajaj Finance.

Only four counters managed to close in the green -- TCS, HUL, PowerGrid and Maruti Suzuki, rising up to 0.31 per cent.

"Pull back rallies can be sharp and it was sharp yesterday. The important question is

-- will this continue? There is no economic news, except the softness in crude, to sustain the rally. There is no reason for FIIs to change their selling strategy since the dollar continues to be strong and US bond yields are attractive and expected to rise further," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. In the broader market, the BSE mid-cap gauge lost 1.53 per cent and the smallcap index declined by 1.11 per cent. All the BSE sectoral indices ended

lower, with metal tumbling 4.96 per cent, followed by basic materials (2.67 per cent), realty (2.24 per cent), consumer discretionary goods & services (1.11 per cent), power (2.11 per cent) and utilities (2.08 per cent).

Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking, said participants are awaiting US Federal Reserve chair's speech scheduled for later on Wednesday.

"Besides, progress on monsoon, crude price and currency movement will be key monitorables."



A sea of people were seen cheering for Diljit as he mentioned Moosewala's name.

He captioned the video, "One Love."

Moosewala was brutally murdered in broad daylight on May 29.

Brian Herbert, Byron Merritt, Kim Herbert, Thomas Tull, Spaihts, Richard P. Rubinstein and John Harrison are executive producing, reports 'Variety'. In Frank Herbert's novel *Dune*, Lady Margot factors early on into the story, when she leaves a critical warning to Paul's mother, Lady Jessica (Ferguson), about the treachery that awaits them on Arrakis after House Atreides takes over from House Harkonnen. Perhaps best known for her performance in the latest James Bond movies, *Spectre* and *No Time to Die*, Seydoux most recently starred alongside Viggo Mortensen and Kristen Stewart in director David Cronenberg's *Crimes of the Future*.

the most beautiful person inside and out and the most incredible soul, Mann concluded his post with a candid confession that he would be grieving for a very, very long time.

He continued, "My darling Dani, the brightest light in any room, my world is nothing but darkness without you. I will miss you forever."

Mann originally auditioned for the *X-Factor* in 2013 before returning the following year. He and four other contestants on the UK talent show were placed into a boy band and they ultimately finished in fifth place. After Stereo Kicks disbanded in July 2015, Mann released music as a solo artist and worked as a songwriter and producer for artists including Rita Ora and Lewis Capaldi.

Hampson frequently shared her support for her fiancée's career on social media.

Yesterday's solution

7	3	4	8	1	5	2	9	6
2	1	9	3	4	6	8	5	7
6	8	5	2	7	9	3	1	4
4	5	1	7	6	3	9	8	2
8	2	6	9	5	4	7	3	1
3	9	7	1	8	2	4	6	5
5	6	3	4	9	7	1	2	8
1	4	2	5	8	3	6	7	9
9	7	8	6	2	1	5	4	3

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

SOLUTION

D	E	F	E	A	T	E	D										
A	I					A	E			A							
N	E	X	T			C	I	N	E	M	A						
G	E					K	M			S							
E	S	S	A			Y			W	A	G	E					
R			R					R									
O	P	E	R	A				S	K	I	P	S					
U			I			P				M		T					
S	H	O	V	E	L					L	A	V	A				
		O		A		U				G	N						
		T				L	I	G	H	T	E	S	T				

INTRODUCING GIRLS IN THE GAFFER DEPARTMENT

SHIKHA DUGGAL

It was a day when Actress Richa Chadha realized that there are no women working in the gaffer circle when in the crew. So her associate, Tanya Negi came up with the idea for a one-of-a-kind workshop. This made Richa launch Undercurrent Lab along with the director of her maiden production. It's all about representation and the *Gangs of Wasseypur* actress wants to bring a socio-cultural change in her own industry. The programme is a joint partnership between the Women in Film and Television Association, India and one of the largest lighting and grip equipment providers in Bollywood Light N Light. In an exclusive conversation with us, Richa spilt the beans on this incubation lab and said, "Last year, for my maiden production I was crewing up. I noticed, there are no women in the light industry. We just need enough options to choose from, why aren't their women who want to apply for this job? In its first year, Suchi and I will focus on training ten women in lighting for cinema. It will start with a first-of-its-kind, hands-on workshop, where the trainees will learn

the art from gaffers and cinematographers from the industry." Richa Chadha can see how sexism continues to be the default behaviour is not only in the film industry but also the society at large. She continued, "Sexist behaviour is the default setting of our society. It's very common behaviour. We hope to change that a bit by slowly and slowly by including women in the workplace. That's how change literally begins. That's what I want to do." After the week-long crash course, the girls will be sent out on the field, to work on film sets as trainees. Two of the ten girls will be placed on the nearly all-women crew on Richa and Ali's maiden production which shoots from October this year. "The experience is great. This is basically a field where there were few women to no women. That's why we started this, and now because the girls are really learning, we are really feeling happy. We hope to continue this, not just for lighting, but maybe for some other department next," she added.

Director Shuchi Talati applied for a grant at Berlinale Talent Footprints in February this year to set up this lab, and won. The 'Undercurrent lab' will give the oppor

This week for Community-wise, *The Pioneer* brings to you how Actress Richa Chadha is on a mission to bring a socio-cultural change in her own industry.



Providing digital solutions

PNS HYDERABAD

Having witnessed a gap in utilizing the data while working in various IT projects, Damodar Gummadapu and his brother Raj Gummadapu came up with the idea of Techwave IT consulting services and solutions. Techwave provides entrepreneurs proper IT and software infrastructure. Telling us more about the same, Raj says, "We enable companies that are doing business and needs to have its presence in the ITR or the web. We help them with the process, to display their products on a website and how they can have seamless interaction and view of it, and ability to buy those products online and same time for their internal operations also. They need systems and IT infrastructures for people to log on and check their details. We provide them with the infrastructure and support them." The founders believe that the main key components for a business to survive is culture, people and values. When we mix the culture and people, we get to see innovations and that is what defines a company. As the decision maker how do you ensure that the culture is maintained, To this, he shares, "As the decision maker or the promoter, a culture is so important because the way we have grown is basically having a very flat structure in the company and then very integrity and diversity and inclusion is a part of our bigger values. As a management, we ensure these are valued and communicated to new employees and associates tell them this is how we live and breath on a daily basis."

Explaining us more about the inspiration, Raj shares, "Before this I was managing large IT projects or engagements and that's where I spent considerable amount. While doing this I always found a gap. We were implementing systems, lot of data being captured by those systems. But those enterprises having a problem of utilizing the data in a meaningful way. That's when we thought of helping the offices of CFO to read the data and make many full decisions of that." Like any other company, Techwave had also faced its own challenges. He says, "I started it in an apartment and I was the only employee, I invested and started working, building relationships, slowly attracted employees and people who believed in us and started joining us and that's a journey. Convincing clients that we would help them was the bigger challenge. Slowly we started gaining the trust and one thing that made us truly successful was our ability to deliver what we had promised to. It took us roughly 14+ years." The two main goals that the organization is looking forward in the upcoming years, is to be a 250 dollar million company with around 10,000 people by 2025. He further adds, "That's more financially and quantitative kind of a goal but the other underline goal is that we want to be recognized as one of the key digital solutions providers as a go to solution provider in the market. We want to be known as a company that provides values. The other goal is how we actually give back to the communities, where we live and work in." Meanwhile, as we wanted to know how is the IT sector going to be in the upcoming years, he shares us about how the IT sector is going to grow with a lot of developments. So, what

are they? He says, "There is a lot of growth in the IT sector. We will grow in a minimum of 6 to 7 percent. In India, one of the biggest advantages that we have is the knowledgeable workforce and our ability with the communications and the scale that we can provide. Innovation here is happening at a rapid pace and we as a country are quickly able to adapt the innovations. The reasons why we see companies in particular states is because of the infrastructure, IT companies needs infrastructure with respect to facilities, internet connectivity, transportation and skilled resources. Now, we see IT companies going to even tier 2 and tier 3 cities. Now availability, resources, and infrastructures are increasing rapidly and in 5 years other states will also have IT sectors." "If we look at where we are as a company, we are very small but we are considered to be a semi-medium company and we have a lot of growth to come in. I come from a very rural background. What we started and what we are able to generate this kind of employment ability to a lot of other people to grow is actually what excites me every day and let the community also grow along with us," the founder signs off.

The world is embracing the idea of travelling with a purpose and wellness holiday, that is the yoga retreats are high in demand. Attending a yoga retreat gives you the opportunity to take time off for yourself and do deeper into your practice. It's like pressing the pause button and giving ourselves the time to reset our mind, body and soul. But with so many options available, the real question is how do you decide which yoga retreat is best for you? It can be quite daunting and confusing to zero down upon something if you don't know what you are looking for. Jenil Dholakia, a yoga and wellness expert shares with us five things to consider while choosing a yoga retreat:

Location

This is probably the most important factor to consider when looking for a yoga retreat. Some basics to check are, where is your retreat happening? Does that location appeal to you? Do you wish to explore that destination? How near or far is it & how will you get there? Check the surroundings and weather. Make sure the climate is suitable for you. Is it a beach or a mountain location? The correct location will be the game changer for your experience.

The teacher

Find out who is going to be your teacher or facilitator for the retreat. If it's a teacher you know or have practised with before, then you surely will have some idea of the teaching style and overall personality. But if it's a teacher that you don't know, then definitely take a look at their website to get some understanding of the teaching styles and offerings. You want to make sure that your teacher is experienced, educated, well-informed and capable of leading a group. Don't hesitate to get in touch with the teacher to clarify any doubts about the teaching.

The budget

A wide range of yoga retreats are available and they can vary quite a bit in the price range. So, it's important to fix your budget and ask questions like what all is included in the package? What all is not and will be your additional expense? What is the maximum you can spend? Account for

Choosing a yoga retreat?

Keep these in mind

the travel cost as well. The price may even differ based on what time of the year you are choosing to do the retreat. Once you have an idea of your budget, you will be searching retreats with some filters and it will be easier to select.

The offerings

When selecting a retreat, you must pay attention to what the retreat offers you. What are your intentions from this experience and what are you seeking? Do you want an intensive yoga asana practice or a more relaxing one? A combination of yoga and nature activities? A reflective and restorative retreat? Choose a retreat that speaks to you, that is suitable to your needs, experience, preference and health conditions to get the most out of your experience.

Duration

Yes, you want to go to the retreat, but how much time you can actually take out of your schedule and everyday life is an important thing to consider before you start looking out for retreats. You can choose anywhere from a short weekend getaway to a longer 7-10 days immersion.



SERENA MAKES WINNING RETURN

Mane joins Bayern

AP ■ EASTBOURNE

Serena Williams made a winning comeback after a year on the sidelines as the American legend teamed with Ons Jabeur to beat Sara Sorribes Tormo and Marie Bouzkova 2-6, 6-3, 13-11 in the Eastbourne International doubles on Tuesday.

Williams, a 23-time Grand Slam singles champion, was back in action for the first time since she made a tearful exit from Wimbledon last year.

The 40-year-old suffered a leg injury during her Wimbledon first round match against Aliaksandra Sasnovich and had not been seen on court since.

Before Williams made the surprise announcement of her return last week, rumours of retirement had swirled around her for several months.

But, with Wimbledon starting on June 27, Williams finally resumed her career, playing with Jabeur at the Wimbledon warm-up event by the Sussex seaside.

Williams and Tunisia's Jabeur, who is third in the WTA singles rankings, saw off Spain's Sorribes Tormo and Bouzkova of the Czech Republic in the last-16 tie.

Although Williams was far from her vintage best, she will be encouraged by her first outing for 12 months.

She and Jabeur will face Japan's Shuko Aoyama and Taiwan's Chan Hao-ching in the quarter-finals.

"It was so fun to play with Ons. We had a lot of fun and our opponents played amazing. We were happy to stay in there," Williams said.

"I called Ons, she has been playing so well and I knew I needed to play some matches and she has always been so nice to me on tour.

"Yeah, I caught some fire behind me, it was good."

Serena has been given a wildcard to play in the singles at Wimbledon as



she restarts her history bid.

Williams is one Grand Slam crown away from equalling Australian Margaret Court's record of 24 singles titles at the majors.

The last of Williams' 23 Grand

Slam singles titles came at the Australian Open in 2017.

Since then she has lost four Grand Slam finals, including at Wimbledon in 2018 and 2019.

Williams won the seventh and

most recent of her seven Wimbledon singles titles in 2016.

Serena, who became a mother in 2017, has plummeted to 1,204th in the WTA rankings due to her period out of action.

TENACIOUS SPIRIT

Wimbledon is widely considered Williams' best chance of winning another Grand Slam and this was her first step towards that goal.

After so long away, Serena soaked up the applause during a raucous reception from the crowd when she walked onto court in the early evening sunshine.

Williams' husband Alexis Ohanian was watching from the stands as his wife made an understandably rusty start.

With Williams' groundstrokes initially lacking their usual precision, the first set quickly slipped away.

Serena was appearing in doubles competition on grass for the first time since 2016, when she won Wimbledon with her sister Venus.

The 14-time Grand Slam doubles champion was well short of peak form and Bouzkova and Sorribes Tormo twice led by a break at the start of the second set.

But Williams showed the tenacious spirit that has defined her career, striking the ball cleaner and crisper as she and Jabeur hit back to level the match at one-set all.

In the match-deciding tie-break, Serena squandered a match point on her serve with a wayward forehand at 9-8 and Jabeur wasted another at 10-9.

But the pair saved a match point from Bouzkova and Sorribes Tormo at 10-11, reeling off the last three points to clinch a dramatic victory in the dusk.

In the Eastbourne women's singles, last year's Wimbledon runner-up Karolina Pliskova lost 6-1, 4-6, 4-6 against Britain's Katie Boulter.

Spanish top seed Paula Badosa was beaten 6-4, 6-3 by British wildcard Jodie Burrage.

In the men's singles, Ryan Peniston also enjoyed an impressive victory on home turf, beating French Open quarter-finalist Holger Rune 4-6, 7-6, (7/5), 6-1.

AP ■ MUNICH

Bayern Munich confirmed the signing of Sadio Mane from Liverpool on Wednesday, as the Senegal forward signed a three-year deal with the Bundesliga champions.

Bayern have reportedly paid a fee which could rise to 41 million euros (\$43 million) for Mane.

The 30-year-old won the Champions League, Premier League, FA Cup, League Cup and Club World Cup titles during six years on Merseyside.

"My agent told me that there were also enquiries from other clubs, but for me, the feeling was right from the start when Bayern presented their plan with me," Mane told German daily Bild.

"It was the right club at the right time.

"It is one of the biggest clubs in the world and the team are always fighting for all the titles."

Mane added he wants to

"do everything to make sure I win titles with my teammates".

Bayern won a 10th straight Bundesliga title last season.

Mane, voted African footballer of the year in 2019, is a versatile attacker who has spent the majority of his career on the wing but can also play through the middle.

His arrival will ease the pain for Bayern if wantaway striker Robert Lewandowski leaves the club, while Serge Gnabry is also stalling over a contract extension.

"Sadio Mane is a global star, who underlines the appeal of Bayern and will increase the attractiveness of the Bundesliga as a whole," said Bayern president Herbert Hainer.

"Fans come to the stadiums to see unique players like this."

The signing of Mane takes some pressure off Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic after Lewandowski made it clear he would not extend his contract which expires next year.



Boehly named new Chelsea chairman, Granovskaia departs

AP ■ LONDON

Todd Boehly on Wednesday was named as Chelsea's new chairman to replace Bruce Buck and will act as interim sporting director after the club confirmed the departure of Marina Granovskaia.

Granovskaia is stepping down from her role as director as part of a shake-up at Stamford Bridge, leaving co-controlling owner Boehly to spearhead Chelsea's negotiations in the transfer window.

All the top Boehly-Clearlake Capital consortium figureheads have been added to Chelsea's new board following the purchase of the club from Roman Abramovich.

"As custodians of Chelsea FC, we now begin executing our long-term vision and plan for the club, creating an outstanding experience for its passionate, loyal fans, and continuing to challenge for top honours in line with Chelsea FC's dedicated history," said Boehly.

"Working together, side by side, we are firmly committed to winning, both on and off the pitch. For us, that effort has begun."

Clearlake chiefs and Chelsea co-controlling owners Behdad Eghbali and Jose Feliciano have also been added to the Blues' new board.

Los Angeles Dodgers co-owner Mark Walter, Swiss magnate Hansjoerg Wyss and British tycoon Jonathan Goldstein have all been officially named on the Chelsea board.

Chelsea will now start the search for a permanent sporting director, with Granovskaia leaving the club after almost 20 years at Stamford Bridge.

Granovskaia rose to prominence as one of the toughest negotiators in football in Abramovich's Chelsea reign.

"Boehly will operate as interim sporting director until the club names a full-time replacement, continuing the club's work towards its targets during the current transfer window,"

said Chelsea's statement.

Granovskaia will remain available during the current transfer window to help the club's transition.

Chelsea face a hectic summer transfer market of transfer dealings.

The club, who finished third in the Premier League last season, have been linked with Sevilla's Jules Kounde, Manchester City's Raheem Sterling and Barcelona forward Ousmane Dembele.



PSG president denies Zidane talks



AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain president Nasser Al-Khelaifi insisted he "never spoke" with Zinedine Zidane about becoming coach in an interview published by French daily Le Parisien on Tuesday, saying the club had "chosen another option".

"We never spoke with him, neither directly, nor indirectly," said Al-Khelaifi, without ruling out that others in Qatar had approached the former France star.

"When I say 'we', it's PSG. Me, I am the president of PSG and I never spoke with him."

The Qatari official said the club was keen to head in a different direction.

"We chose a coach who will

be the best for what we want to put in place," said Al-Khelaifi as he confirmed talks with Nice boss Christophe Galtier.

"I hope we'll quickly find an agreement but I respect Nice and the president (Jean-Pierre) Rivere, everyone stands up for their own interests."

TEXTOR COMPLETES LYON TAKEOVER

Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas said on Tuesday a deal had been struck for US businessman John Textor to complete a takeover of the seven-time French champions.

Eagle Football Holdings, a sports investment vehicle controlled by Crystal Palace shareholder Textor, is set to acquire a majority stake in the Ligue 1 club.

Delayed Tokyo 2020 Olympics cost double original estimate



AP ■ TOKYO

The final price tag for last year's Tokyo Olympics was more than double the city's original 2013 estimate after a one-year coronavirus postponement added to the already hefty bill.

The organising committee said Tuesday the Games had cost 1.42 trillion yen, the equivalent of \$13 billion at the time.

At today's rates, with the yen at a 24-year low against the dollar, the figure would be \$10.4 billion.

Tokyo 2020 was held a year later than planned because of the pandemic — the first Olympics postponed in peacetime — and spectators were banned from nearly all events, which were held under strict

Covid-19 countermeasures.

The Games cost twice the 734 billion yen that the Tokyo Games organisers had predicted in their bid to the International Olympic Committee in 2013, but less than the final pre-Games budget unveiled in December 2020.

Despite losing out on ticket sales, organisers saved some cash by simplifying events and avoiding the cost of hosting millions of fans.

The organising committee, which disbanded at the end of June, said the event's final cost was 200 billion yen less than projected in its pre-Games budget in 2020 and 29 billion yen less than the final slimmed-down costs prediction in December 2021.

"It's up to everyone involved in this event to pass on the legacy of the Tokyo Olympics to the next generation," said Tokyo 2020 chief Seiko Hashimoto.

Tokyo experienced a Covid-19 surge last year as the Olympics approached, fuelling fears the event could worsen outbreaks in Japan and possibly the world.

The northern Japanese city of Sapporo is bidding to host the Winter Olympics in 2030.

A March survey of Sapporo and the surrounding region showed that a majority of the public are in favour of holding the event.

Officials have ruled out holding a public referendum on the 2030 bid.

PRAVIN THIPSAY

In my column 'Champion born this month', today I have the pleasure of presenting a beautiful game by a champion who can be called William Shakespeare of Chess. Let us see what some 'all time greats' have said about him. — "He was the most accurate Chess Player" and "He was probably the greatest genius in Chess" — Bobby Fischer. Or "He mostly played with zero inaccuracy" and "He is the only player who never made a blunder" — Garry Kasparov. Or "Finest Chess player ever existed" — Adolf Anderssen.

Though nothing much has been said about Morphy by the Soviets, most of the Soviet Chess Trainers give a lot of emphasis on teaching his way of play. In the famous book 'Miniatures by World Champions', Anatoly Karpov has dedicated more than one third of the book to the games of this all time great player.

Yes, I am talking of the undisputed Champion, Paul Morphy!

Paul Charles Morphy (22nd June 1837 — 10th July 1884) was born at New Orleans in a wealthy distinguished family. According to his uncle Ernest Morphy (a strong and imaginative player himself), no one formally taught Chess to Paul. However, at the age of 13, Paul became famous as the best player in

DE RIVIERE – PAUL MORPHY

United States. In 1850s Paul Morphy visited Europe and defeated the strongest players in the world with such an ease that he was acknowledged as the Best Chess Player in the World. (The official World Champion titles, however, started much later, in 1886). Morphy's victory over Count Carl Isouard and Duke of Brunswick of France is probably the most famous Chess game. His stunning Rook and Queen sacrifice against the then British Champion Henry Bird finds place in every book on Chess combinations.

Morphy didn't talk or write much about Chess but his simple quote "Help your pieces so they can help you" is the best advice a Chess Trainers could give to their pupils. Paul Morphy demonstrated that the safety of King and activity of pieces invariably decided outcome of a Chess game. Even today, the times of Paul Morphy are known as "The Golden Era of Chess".

Today we will see a comparatively unknown but extremely creative game by Morphy. I was lucky to see it as a child, that too, annotated by master of King side attack, Grandmaster Leonid Shamkovici. I was indeed greatly impressed by the



originality of Morphy's play then but I must confess that today I stand even more impressed by the game, the planning as well as the execution.

1. e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5

This double attack on Black's f-pawn is a standard procedure of attacking f7. 4...d5 5.exd5 Na5!

The classical system of counter-attack for Black. Instead of recapturing the pawn at d5, Black goes after the enemy bishop.

6.d3?!

This move allows Black to take the initiative but it was a popular choice at that time.

Better is 6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.Be2 h6 9.Nf3 e4 10.Ne5 Bd6 though Black's lead in development compensates for the sacrificed Pawn.

6...h6

Black drives back the White knight. 8.Nd4 ...Bc5! 9.Nb3? allows Bg4! with a powerful initiative to Black.

8.Nf2 is bad due to 8...Bg4! 8...Nxc4 9.dxc4 Bc5! 10.h3! 10...0 11.Nh2 Nh7?!

Black shows a very deep understanding of the position since he realizes that piece play alone will not break through White's position. He

prepares a 'Pawn Storm' by pushing the f-pawn till it is stopped by White pieces. However, more accurate would have been 11...e3! 12.Bxe3 Bxe3 13.fxe3 Ne4 14.Nf1 Qh4+ 15.g3 Qf6! 16.c3 Bf5! 17.Nbd2 Nc5!;

11...c6! was a strong alternative as well. 12.Be3! was called for. 12...f5 13.Nb3 Bd6! 14.0-0

Trying to castle on the Queen side would have led to catastrophe. For example, 14.Bd2? e3!! 15.fxe3 Bg3+ 16.Kd1 Nf6! 17.Be1 Bxh2! 18.Rxh2 b5! 19.Nd4 bxc4 20.Qxc4 Nxd5 21.Nc6 Ba6 22.Nxd8 Bxc4 23.Nc6 Nxe3+ 24.Kc1 Rae8! 25.Bb4 Rf6 26.Na5 Bd5 27.g3 Nf1 etc.

14...Bxh2+! 15.Kxh2 f4!

Black has the advantage due to his active pieces and White's vulnerable king.

The knight enters the game with a gain of tempo on the White queen.

17.Qg6!? was an interesting option. For example, 17...Bf5 18.Qh5 Bxc2 19.Nd4 Bd3 etc.

17.Qd3! would have led to a complex and unclear position.

The move played -- 17.Qd4? --, allows a stunning combination followed by an unexpected finale.

Morphy clinched the issue with 17...Nf3+!!

A beautiful sacrifice which creates decisive light square weakness on White's King side.

17...Bxh3? allows White to

defend with 18.Bxf4! Bd7 19.Kg1 etc. 18.gxf3 Qh4 19.Rh1!

White seems to have guarded his King side well. The obvious capture 19...Qxh3 check gives White a clear upper hand after 20. Kg1 whereas an attempt to bring the King Rook in play with 19...Rf6 allows White to move the King to safety after 20.Kg2!

However, Morphy had already planned his final assault after the Rook move as well.

The point! Now the White King has been caught in a cage with no possible escape.

20.Nc5 leaves the White Queen unguarded and is punished with 20...Rf6! 21.Bxf4 Bf5+! 22.Kg1 Rg6+ 23.Bg3 Qxd4 etc.

20.Bxf4 Rxf4 21.Qxf4 Qxf4+ 22.Kxh3 Qxf3+ 23.Kh2 Qxf2+ 24.Kh3 Rf8 is hopeless.

20.Rg1? allows 20...Bf1 check-mate! 20. Kg1 allows 20...Qg5 ch. 21. Kh2, Qg2 Checkmate.

20...Rf6 21.Qxf6

21.Ra1! leads to an immediate mate after 21...Bf5+ 22.Kg2 Rg6.

21.Nc5 trying to bring the Knight for defence is too slow. Black plays 21...Rg6! followed by a deadly discovered check by the Queen.

21.Qd3 (to stop ...Rg6) allows a similar finish as in the game. 21...Qxf2+! 22.Kxh3 Qg3#

21...Qxf2+! 22.Kxh3 Qg3 Checkmate!



Panja Vaishnav Tej's next is full of action

Leading production houses Sithara Entertainment and Fortune Four Cinemas are coming together to produce an action spectacle, headlined by Panja Vaishnav Tej. The film's muhurat ceremony was held at Ramanaidu Studio on Wednesday. Actress Sreeleela has been roped in as the female lead for the project. First-time filmmaker N Srikanth Reddy, who has written the story, will direct the film, tentatively titled #PVT04.

Filmmaker Trivikram, Haarika and Hassine Creations founder S Radha Krishna, actor Sai Dharam Tej, director Sudheer Varma, Anaganaga Oka Raju director Kalyan, producer S Naga Vamsi graced the pooja ceremony. While Trivikram directed the muhurat shot, Sai Dharam Tej clapped for it and filmmaker Sudheer Varma switched on the camera. S Naga Vamsi honorarily



handed over the script to director Srikanth Reddy. A special promo, offering a glimpse into the film's theme, was released commemorating its launch. Vaishnav Tej and the antagonist are in a war of words in the glimpse, where there are several mythological references to Rama, Ravana, Lanka, Ayodhya, and Shiva. When the antagonist says, "You may have heard about Rama vanquishing Lanka but can you guess the plight of Ayodhya if a ten-headed man attacks it?" and Vaishnav Tej retorts firmly, "This Ayodhya isn't ruled by Rama, but the Lord he worships, Rudra Kaleswara (Shiva). Bring it on.

I'll rip you apart."

The intense background enhances the impact of the glimpse immensely and action junkies can expect nothing short of a feast from #PVT04. A launch poster where Vaishnav holds a trisoolam in front of a bull catches your interest too. "This is an out-and-out mass vehicle for Vaishnav Tej. It's a full-on action entertainer," say the makers. The untitled film will go on floors shortly. Other details about the cast and crew will be out soon. Presented by PDV Prasad, the film is produced by S. NagaVamsi and Sai Soujanya. The film is slated for a Sankranti 2023 release.

'I want to play a cool, bubbly character'

Irma Mor takes us on her journey from getting the role of politician Konda Surekha, to her being praised by Konda Sushmita, daughter of Surekha-Murali and also the producer of the film

PNS | HYDERABAD

Actress Irma Mor is kicked about the theatrical release *Kondaa* on June 23, wherein she has played politician Konda Surekha from Warangal.

In this interview, Irma Mor talks about her background, how she bagged *Kondaa*, playing Surekha, and more.

Beginning with, she takes us through, "I came to Mumbai in 2017. I joined theatre and was associated with theatre for 1.5 years or so. I auditioned for a lot of roles in feature films while in Mumbai. This is when I got in touch with Ram Gopal Varma sir, who asked me to audition for *Bhairava Geetha*. That's when my film career took off."

In the past two years, she has tried to understand the industry more and learn things. She has also brushed up her acting skills. In 2021, she shot for two web series. And then, "*Kondaa* came to me last year when the lockdown was still on. I loved Surekha and the character arc offered to me. There is a lot of variety in the character. I thank sir for offering me this versatile role. I watched Surekha's videos to understand her demeanour. I did a look test wearing a saree. I had to look strong on-screen because Surekha is a politician."

It seems RGV had a certain image in mind. It was very important what not to wear, and what not to show on the screen. Listening to Surekha's interviews helped the actress understand her personality and make her own notes. She didn't want to copy her, though. She is a simple lady.

RGV wanted Irma to add colour to her persona. He wanted Irma to be gracious as well.

Moreover, "RGV sir has shot every frame of *Kondaa* himself. He is a clear-minded filmmaker whose clarity of thought gives his artists the space to showcase talent. When you are playing a real-life character, you have to portray the person as realistically as possible. You can't take too many liberties. The actor has to get into the person's mind space and imagine how the person you are playing might have looked when he or she was 20, 30 and so on."

Surekha is a strong-headed woman who has done a lot in life. But, Irma had just started in life. So, the actress couldn't have compared herself with her. What is similar between them is that they both are strong-willed. She says, "My parents have always taught me to be fearless. Commitment to yourself is something I relate to Surekha. In fact, my co-star, Thrigun is very good. He is very serious and quite focused on the set. He is in his own zone. He is a quiet personality on set. Otherwise, he speaks a lot and is expressive. He was very helpful throughout."

Konda Sushmita, Surekha's daughter, has produced the film. After watching the rushes of the film, especially the interval bang where Konda Murali gets shot, she called the actress. Initially, she was sceptical as to whether the actress would be able to portray her mother authentically. After all, Irma's social background is different.

After watching the rushes, the daughter found Irma authentic. "She told me I had given 1000%. She was present when her father was shot at. The execution of the interval scene convinced her that we were doing it right. So, life is full of ups and downs. You can't stop because the circumstance-

stances are adverse. You have to live your life. You have to respect yourself. You have to stand for yourself. You have to achieve what you want to. That's what my character brings out. As an actor, I want to play all kinds of characters. At the moment, I want to play a cool, bubbly character. I have something coming up in Telugu too, that's all I can reveal," she signs off.



Revathy, Nithya Menen, Suhasini to star in *Modern Love Hyderabad*

Actors Revathy, Nithya Menen and director Nagesh Kukunoor are some names who will be seen as part of the upcoming anthology *Modern Love Hyderabad*. The Hyderabad edition of the acclaimed international Original anthology *Modern Love*, showcases six diverse stories exploring different facets and forms of love rooted in the city's many unique milieus.

The anthology includes *My Unlikely Pandemic Dream* Partner directed by Nagesh Kukunoor and it features Revathy, Nithya Menen.

Kukunoor's *Fuzzy, Purple And Full Of Thorns* stars Aadhi Pinisetty and Ritu Varma. Uday Gurrula directed *What Clown Wrote This Script* will have Abijeet Duddala and Malavika Nair share screen space.

Then there is *Why Did She Leave Me There...?* again by Kukunoor starring Suhasini Maniratnam and Naresh Agastya.

Devika Bahudhanam's directorial *About That Rustle In The Bushes* has Ulka Gupta and Naresh.



Venkatesh Maha helmed *Finding Your Penguin* stars Komalee Prasad.

Aparna Purohit, head of India Originals, Amazon Prime Video said, "*Modern Love Hyderabad* explores the joys, complications, tribulations and the healing power of love. Working with ElaheHiptoola and Nagesh Kukunoor to tell these emotionally charged but rooted stories have been an incredible creative journey of ideation and collaboration."

Set in the city of Hyderabad, these stories explore the culture, history and the confluence of culture through its lanes like never before. We are certain that these stories will make you smile, laugh, pine, cry and restore your faith in the power of love."

Kukunoor added that unlike the New York and Mumbai editions, which are megapolises, the charm of *Modern Love Hyderabad* lies in the fact that it is a city which has witnessed

rapid modernisation in the last decade or so while keeping in touch with its multi-cultural roots.

"This made for an excellent study in how the true cultural essence and social fabric of the city could feature in these stories of modern love," said the showrunner and one of the directors.

Produced under the banner of SIC Productions, the new Telugu Amazon Original Series will be available to stream on Prime Video starting 8 July.

A SIC Productions, the new Telugu Amazon Original series is produced by well-acclaimed creator Elahe Hiptoola with Nagesh Kukunoor as the showrunner.

"Audiences are in for an entertainment treat as the anthology features some of the finest actors from the region who are masters of their craft and directed by filmmakers of repute. We have on board some brilliant musicians who have created original tracks for the episodes elevating the uniquely Hyderabad flavour of all our stories," added producer Elahe Hiptoola.

Chinmayi Sripada sang a bhajan while giving birth to her twins



Singer Chinmayi Sripada and her husband Rahul Ravindran are blessed with twin children.

The celebrity couple took to their social media profiles to announce the names of their twins- a girl and a boy. "Driptah and Sharvas, The new and forever centre of our Universe," Chinmayi wrote on Instagram.

She said, "And if you need to know, I actually 'sang' a bhajan during the cesarean as our twins entered the world. Get a grip on that. More on this later. But, for now, this is enough."

In one of her recent posts, Chinmayi Sripada wrote, "I'm absolutely loving these people who are DM-ing me asking if I

had twins through a surrogate just because I didn't post photos of me being pregnant."

"I didn't post photos of me being pregnant. Only those who were in my innermost circle knew because I was protecting myself," she stated.

Chinmayi further stated, "I was and will always be extremely guarded about my personal life, my family. My friends' circle." Chinmayi also announced that she and her husband Rahul Ravindran would not be posting any of their twins' photos on social media, for at least a while.

"Photos of our kids won't be on our socials either for a long while," she said.

Ramarao On Duty releasing on July 29

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja's unique action thriller *Ramarao On Duty* directed by debutant Sarath Mandava and produced grandly by Sudhakar Cherukuri under SLV Cinemas LLP and RT Teamworks is done with its shoot. Post-production works are currently under-



Vijay made me what I am today: Producer Jagadish

Greeting actor Vijay Talapathi on his birthday, producer Jagadish on Wednesday showered praises on the actor saying that it was literally Vijay who had made him into what he was today. Jagadish, who was a manager of Vijay before turning producer with the actor's film, *Master*, took to Instagram to post his birthday wishes for the actor. He wrote, "(This is) the day that I get more excited than my birthday. Yes, my Talapathi's birthday. A person who has literally made me who

I am today. Instrumental in building a life that I cherish every moment of. Not just me but the way you always care and bring up the people around you is astonishing.

Have always felt blessed being around you and the love and respect I have for you is something beyond words na. Wishing you a very happy and healthy birthday." Not just Jagadish, scores of film celebrities and fans have been sending their birthday wishes to the actor, the second look of whose 66th film, *Varisu*, is to be released today.



Tollywood actor Ram is all set to show his power with his high-octane mass action entertainer *The Warriorr*. The film is directed by Lingusamy and will release on July 14. The makers are in full swing in promoting the film and the makers on Wednesday released the Whistle song. The makers are

Suriya released *Whistle Song* from *The Warriorr*

promoting the song as the Mass dance number of the year. Sharing the details, the makers posted "Keep Those Woofers Ready! Because the

Mass Dance Number on the Way #WhistleSong digital launch by @Suriya_offl Launch Event Today from 7:12 PM at AMB Cinemas." Kollywood actor Suriya released the song on Wednesday.

Ram is set to make his entry into Kollywood with this film. Ram is romancing Kriti Shetty while taking on Adi Pinisetty as the antagonist.



Akshara Gowda, Naditya, Chirag Jani, Bharati Raja, and Brahmaji are playing important roles and the music is scored by Devi Sri Prasad.